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The Sceptre of the Elvenking

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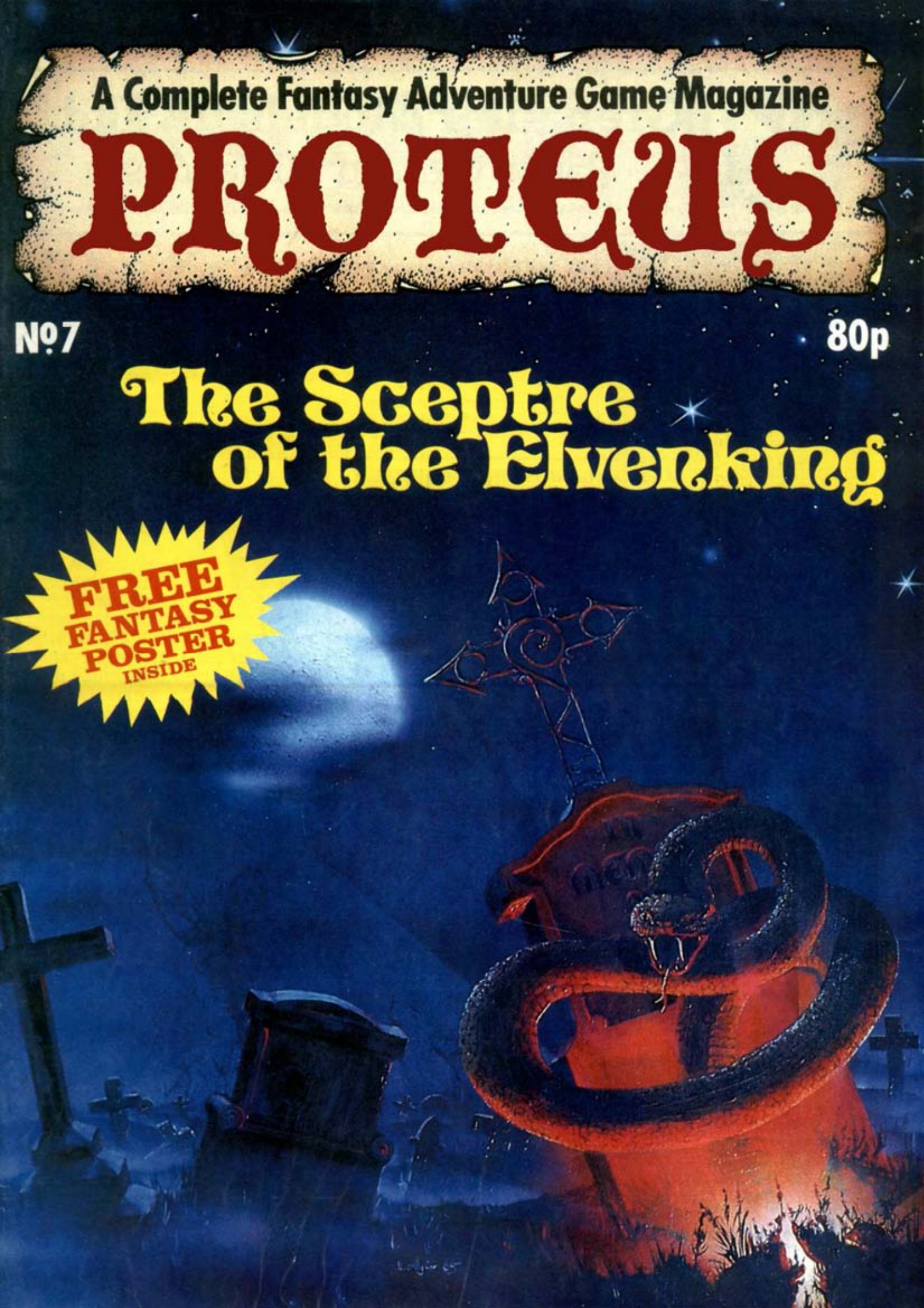

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222 Nyarlathotep
223 Tsathoggua
224 Old One and Dimensional Shambler
225 Spawn of Cthulhu
226 Hunting Horror of Nyarlathotep
227 Great Race of Yith

PROTEUS No. 7

The Sceptre of the Elvenking

by David Brunskill

DICE and a pencil are all you need to begin this adventure – then *you* decide which route to take, which dangers to brave.

As you progress in your Quest, you are likely to encounter various traps, or face monsters. You will also get information, or find certain items which will be of help to you in your quest. You should record these in your *quest sheet* as well as keeping an account of how many rations you have left. As you use up rations, remember to cross them off in your *quest sheet*.

It is important that you build up a map of the way. You may not succeed at your first attempt, but each new journey will give you more information – until you are at last successful in your quest.

If you try to read the magazine in numerical order, it will make no sense. You must choose, when you are given the choice, which section to turn to, and which traps, puzzles, or monsters to face. Good luck!

The free poster in Issue 8, on sale September 19th, is by Les Edwards.

The story, "Treasure of the Cursed Pyramid", will be by Elizabeth Caldwell, who will be well-known to our regular readers.

The hidden entrance to a sealed-off section of the Pyramid of Ptah-hotep leads to priceless treasures. The sealed section also confines the accursed Spirit of Seth, Incarnation of Evil, Slayer of Kinsmen, Enemy of Gods.

To reach the treasure you must risk the curse of Seth – the curse can only be avoided by speaking words shown as hieroglyphs. You must find the clues to the hieroglyphs before you meet Seth.

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Introduction

THIS is not a story about our modern world, but one of long ago, when strange creatures roamed the land, and Sorcerers possessed great power. As an adventurer, your Strength, Courage and Agility have brought you safely through many daunting quests in the past. And when you begin this adventure, you will need all these qualities. Below, you will discover – with a little luck – how swift and strong, you are.

You will need two dice, a pencil, and several sheets of paper: use the pencil and paper to draw a map of your progress. You may not succeed at the first attempt, and the map will be useful in future attempts.

There is a Quest Sheet opposite, for you to write down your scores for Dexterity and Strength, and to keep a note of your rations, secrets or Spells learnt, and items discovered. You may prefer, before you begin your adventure, to use the printed Quest Sheet simply as a model for the things you will need to take note of, or keep a record of, during your Quest. If you do this, you will obviously need another piece of paper to copy down the headings on the Quest Sheet.

Dexterity and Strength

Roll one dice. Add 6 to this number, and make a note of it on your Quest Sheet. This is your *Dexterity* score, and indicates your skill and mastery of swordsmanship.

Roll two dice. Add 12 to this number, and make a note of it on your Quest Sheet. This is your *Strength* score, and is a measure of your fitness and stamina.

Your Strength and Dexterity ratings will probably change during the course of your adventure. You may lose Strength points in battle, for example, and then restore them by eating a meal. Your characteristics may also be affected by magical items, and, in such situations, you will be told how many points to add onto or deduct from your current ratings.

You must remember, however, that your Strength and Dexterity scores must never exceed their *Initial* values, as determined by the dice rolls at the start of any one adventure.

Using magic

Should you be fortunate enough, in the course of your quest, to gain a Potion of Rejuvenation, you may use it at any time, except during a battle. It will restore your Strength score to its *Initial* level, providing you still have some strength left to use it – i.e. at least one Strength point.

Remember also, if you are able to make use of spells, to deduct the cost of a spell (in Strength points) at the time you cast the spell.

Rules for fighting

As you explore, you will encounter creatures which you may choose to engage in combat, or be forced to fight with for your life. Each creature will have its own Dexterity and Strength scores, given in the text: make a note of these.

To resolve a battle:

1. Roll two dice, and add the creature's current Dexterity score. This is its *Fighting Power.*

2. Roll two dice, and add your own current Dexterity score. This is your *Fighting Power.*

3. If your *Fighting Power is* greater than the creature's, you have scored a blow and wounded it. Subtract two Strength points from its Strength score at that moment (unless told otherwise in the text). If the creature's *Fighting Power* is greater than yours in this round, it has wounded you. Subtract two points from your current Strength score. If both scores are the same, you have parried each other's blows, and neither of you loses any points.

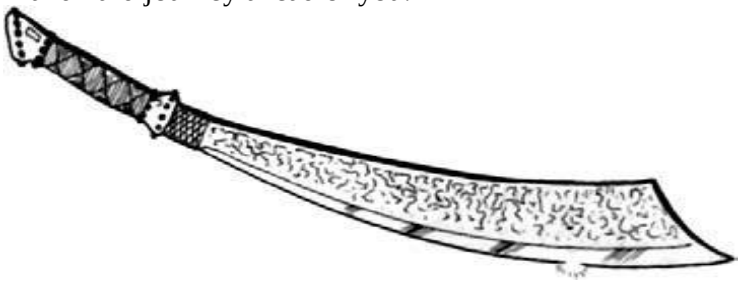
The next round in the battle is done in just the same way. You repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 above. When either your or the creature's Strength score is reduced to zero, the battle is over. A zero Strength score means death.

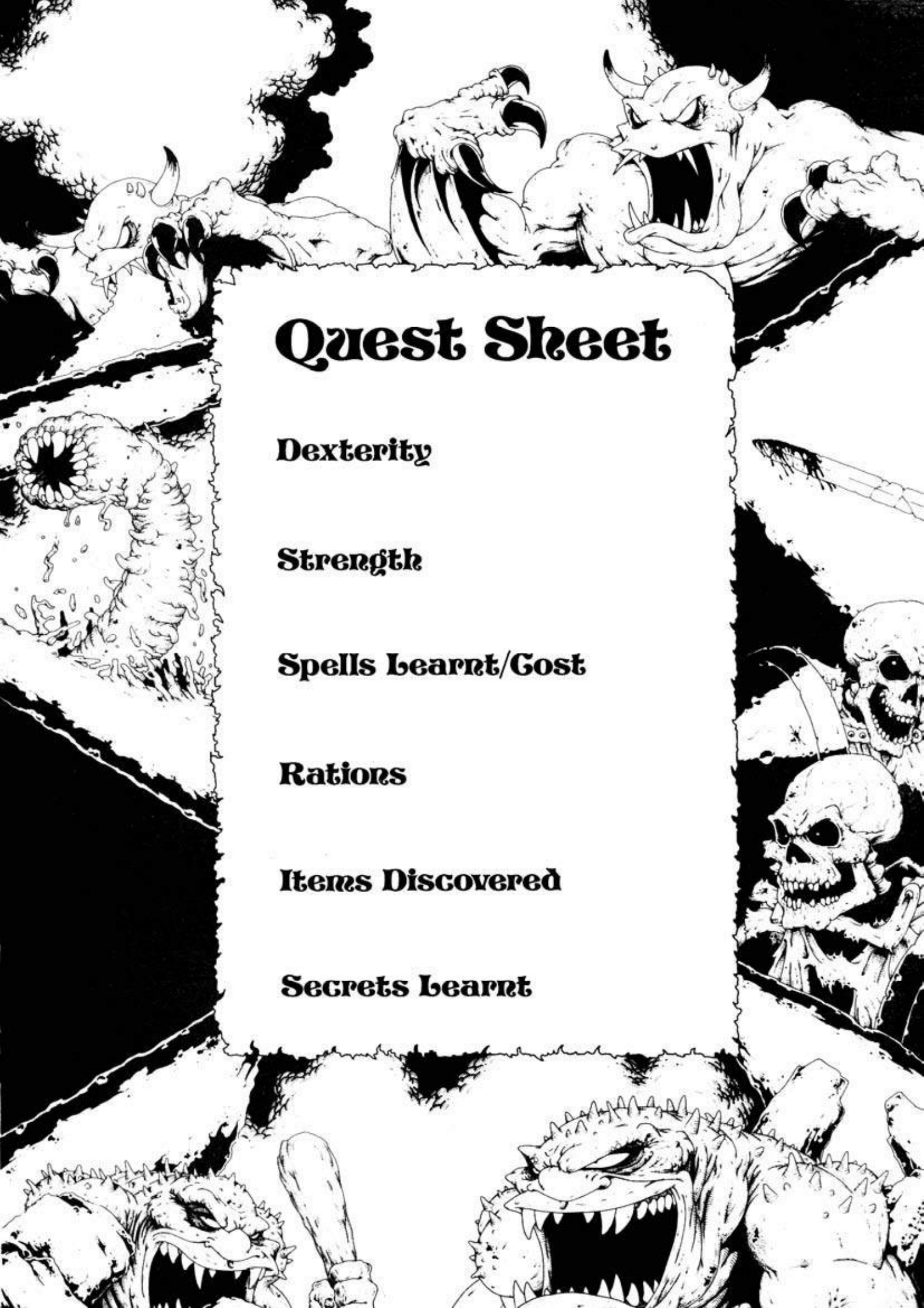
Losing and gaining points

In some sections, you will be awarded extra points (for example, you may read "Gain three Strength points"). You add these to your current Strength score: but remember, these scores may never exceed their *Initial* values. When you lose points (for example, "Lose one Dexterity point and two Strength points"), you simply deduct these from your current scores.

Replenishing your Strength

You will shortly read about the beginning of your Quest in the town of Thorndrake. Before leaving, you make up sufficient provisions for six meals. These are your rations for the task ahead of you – make a note of them. Eating a meal restores five Strength points. When you stop for a meal – which you may do at any time, except during a battle – add five points to your current Strength score, and deduct one from the number of meals remaining to you. But remember to use your rations wisely: you have a long and hard journey ahead of you.





Quest Sheet

Dexterity

Strength

Spells Learnt/Cost

Rations

Items Discovered

Secrets Learnt

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Your Quest Begins..

You have been resting for some days in the town of Thorndrake, eating and sleeping, and making up your strength for what you feel instinctively will be a new Quest. Your gold pieces are now almost spent, and it is time to move on. The last of your money has paid for your evening meal, and also for making up six good packed meals, stored in your backpack. You have your tried-and-trusted sword and shield, and are wearing light leather armour.

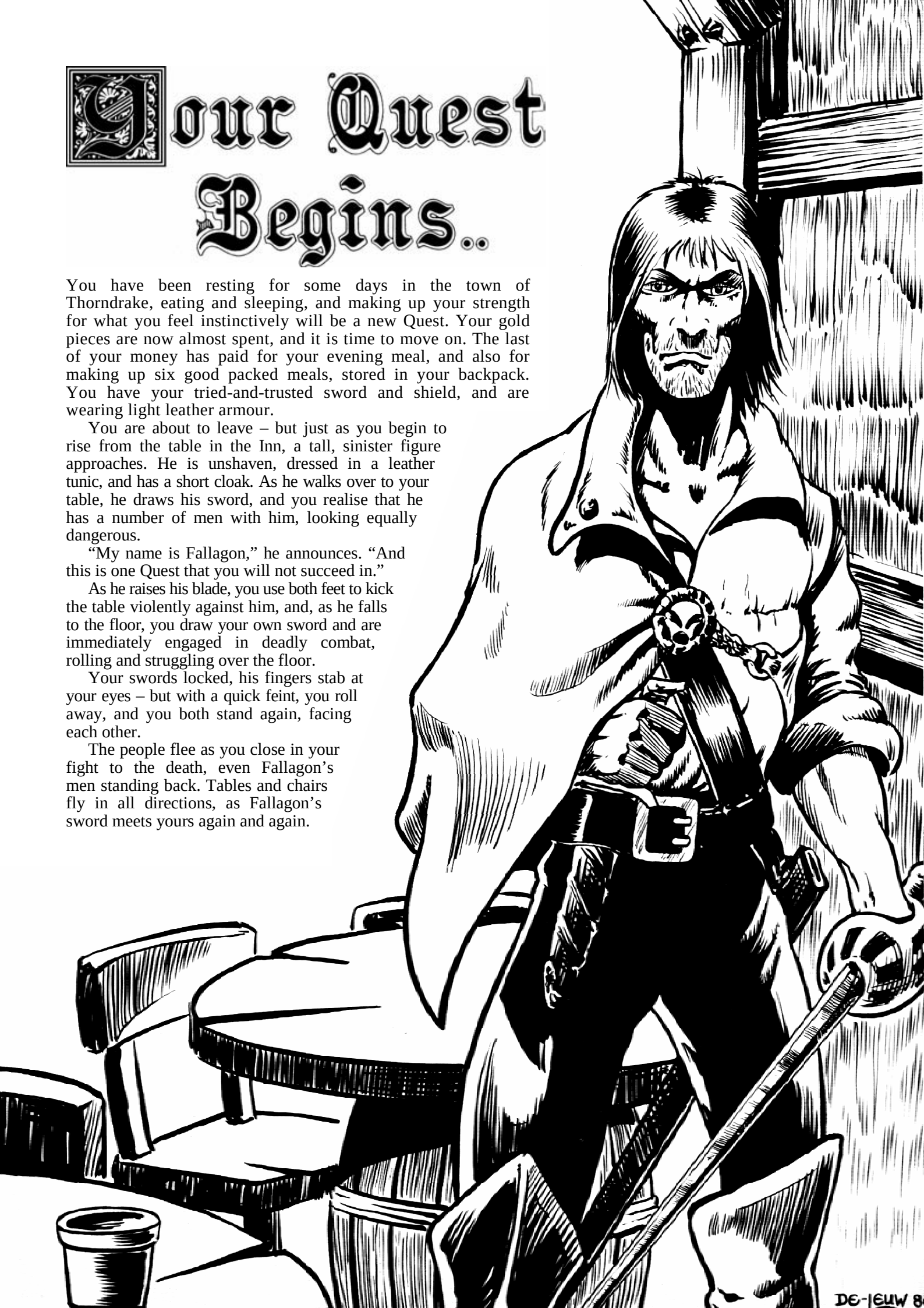
You are about to leave – but just as you begin to rise from the table in the Inn, a tall, sinister figure approaches. He is unshaven, dressed in a leather tunic, and has a short cloak. As he walks over to your table, he draws his sword, and you realise that he has a number of men with him, looking equally dangerous.

"My name is Fallagon," he announces. "And this is one Quest that you will not succeed in."

As he raises his blade, you use both feet to kick the table violently against him, and, as he falls to the floor, you draw your own sword and are immediately engaged in deadly combat, rolling and struggling over the floor.

Your swords locked, his fingers stab at your eyes – but with a quick feint, you roll away, and you both stand again, facing each other.

The people flee as you close in your fight to the death, even Fallagon's men standing back. Tables and chairs fly in all directions, as Fallagon's sword meets yours again and again.



The clash of steel on steel resounds about the Inn, until at last you drive a straight blow into Fallagon's chest, even as his sword whistles over your head.

As Fallagon gasps his last breath, his men approach, and you know that this will be a fight in which you will have little chance. Grabbing a broken chair, you hurl it at the approaching figures, and prepare to get out quickly.

Now read on....

1

The fight over, the Inn is a shambles. Fallagon's men are, for a moment, unsure what to do, and you look quickly around for an exit.

You see that there are, in fact, four ways out of the Inn. Will you take the door to the:

North?	Turn to **26**
South?	Turn to **163**
East?	Turn to **91**
West?	Turn to **18**

2

As you put your hand into the jar you feel a painful bite, and then another as you immediately pull your hand out. A small poisonous spider is clinging to your hand, and the jar contains a nest of them!

Angrily, you shake it off, as your hand begins to swell. Lose four Strength points, and, if you are still alive, you leave the room to continue on your way East – turn to **123**.

3

You raise your arm and cast the spell, and immediately, a jet of white-hot fire shoots from your hand. The water bubbles and hisses almost at once, and you back away from the ring of fire that encircles the boiling water. The flames burn fiercely for some time, as the room quickly fills with steam, and then slowly die away. You wave a path forward through the swirling steam, and look into the pit: the water has boiled away almost completely.

After waiting a while to allow everything to cool, you climb down into the pit. At the very bottom, in about two feet of water that is still rather hot, you find the source of the blood-red glow: a huge ruby, half the size of your hand!

Delighted with your new acquisition, you stow it in your backpack, and climb back up and out of the room, back into the corridor to continue East. However, the corridor very soon takes a sharp turn to the left, and you walk North along it for some way – and suddenly stop, drawing your sword, as you see a cloaked and hooded figure ahead of you, at the edge of your vision. But as you steal silently up behind the figure, it abruptly vanishes into thin air! As you stand there, looking wildly to left and right, you hear a familiar voice behind you: "Hello again, friend. How have you fared?"

Slowly, a smile spreads over your face, as you turn to see Aalandrin again. His cloak is ripped, and he is cut and bruised, but the eyes are as clear and penetrating as ever. You begin to recount your adventures, but Aalandrin cuts you short. "We still have not recovered the Sceptre," he says. "Quickly, this way!" Together, you hurry North, until you have to stop at a solid brass door across the width of the corridor. "I have tried everything," says Aalandrin, "but it will not open."

You see that there is a keyhole in the door, set in a square of gold. "Somewhere," mutters Aalandrin, "there must be a key."

At that instant, a crash from behind makes you both wheel round. A metal wall has dropped, sealing you in – and even as you watch, it begins to glow, dull-red at first, then more brightly. The heat it gives off is breath-catching, and rapidly increasing.

Do you have a golden key? If so, turn to **24**. If you do not have this key, you are trapped, deep in the Temple of Eternal Darkness, and will be baked alive, your quest over.

4

You begin to think that you have made the right decision, as the road, though empty and silent, is much improved. It turns West after a short while, and continues for some distance. But the houses at least seem to be inhabited, some with lights on against the gathering dusk, and there are a few people in the streets, poorly-dressed but cheerful.

Your spirits lifted, you press on quickly, and the road eventually turns North. In your hurry, you only just in time notice the figure moving from the deep shadow ahead of you. Your hand is instinctively on your sword-hilt as he pulls a dagger from his cloak and strikes at you. You have no way of knowing whether he is another of Fallagon's men, or simply a thief, or both, but you do not intend to waste time finding out, and at once close in battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
THIEF:	8	10

If you win, turn to **93**.

5

You are in a narrow, South-facing alleyway, which almost immediately turns to your left as you hurry down it, and continues for some little way East, before turning South again. A short distance South, the road ends at a junction. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **40**
West?	Turn to **94**

6

The corridor goes North for a short way, before turning West. You walk with care for some way, and then draw your sword and approach warily – there is some strange kind of wild movement ahead. Turn to **28**.

7

Breathless, and running with sweat after your exhausting fight, you spend a short time sitting at the side of the road, regaining your confidence and concentration. Looking carefully around, you get to your feet and continue on your way South; but you have gone only a short distance when a movement on both sides of the road ahead alerts you to danger.

Your sword and shield at the ready, you move slowly forwards; there is a sudden cry, and two Dwarfs rush from the trees – one carries a warhammer, and the other a short spear, and they attack at once, shouting and screaming. You must fight both Dwarfs at the same time: to do this, throw the dice as normal for the first Dwarf and yourself, and adjust Strength scores accordingly. Then throw for the second Dwarf: if his Fighting Power is greater than yours, he has wounded you. If your Fighting Power is the same or greater in this round, you have defended successfully against his attack, and sustain no injury.

Continue until you have killed the first Dwarf; then you must fight the second Dwarf to the death, as normal.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FIRST DWARF:	8	8
SECOND DWARF:	9	10

If you defeat both, turn to **185**.

8

After a short time, a door on your right catches your eye, and you stop to look at it more closely. It is very firmly locked, and when you strike it with your sword-handle, there is a dull thud – it is obviously several inches thick. The dark wood of which it is made is criss-crossed with bars of a hard metal, and you realise that it is very unlikely that you will be able to break it down. However, some magic might help – if you have the spell of Intuition and wish to use it here, turn to **199**. Otherwise, you will have to continue on your way West – turn to **27**.

9

Walking warily South, your hand on your sword-hilt, you shortly find that you are at a junction. To your right, the corridor seems to stretch some way while to your left, it looks as though it ends at another junction, not too far away. Will you go:

East? Turn to **101**
West? Turn to **36**

10

The route West is straight, and you are unchallenged. Making use of your power of Seeing, you notice that there is a corridor to your right, at the end of which is the door through which you originally entered with Aalandrin. Ignoring that, you press on carefully, and stop after a time, as you realise that there is a way South. Will you:

Continue West? Turn to **153**
Try the way South? Turn to **20**

11

As you get shakily to your feet, you look around the small, ditty basement. Other than hundreds of cobwebs and years of dust, it is empty. Looking up, you see that the floorboards are only just above your head, and, reaching up, you can haul yourself out to continue on your way West.

Back in the corridor once more, you find that it very soon turns to your right, and you follow the way North until you see that there is a passage to your left. Will you now:

Try the way West?	Turn to **77**
Continue North?	Turn to **117**

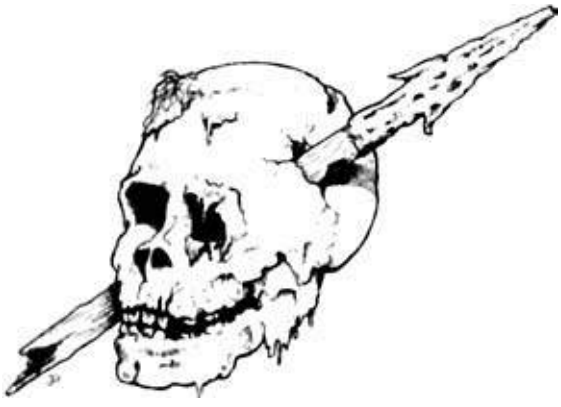
12

Putting away your sword, and placing your backpack at the side of the pit, you swing your shield across your back, take several deep breaths, and plunge in. The weight of your weapons and armour carries you down quite quickly, and as you reach the bottom of the pit, you can see the source of the glow: a huge, heavy ruby, half the size of your hand.

Clutching your prize, you begin swimming back up, your lungs starting to ache. But as bubbles of air escape from the corner of your mouth, and the pain in your chest increases, it dawns on you that the weight of your weapons and armour, which carried you to the bottom so easily, are now dragging you back as you swim desperately towards the surface!

Wildly you try to unstrap your sword and shield, as you feel yourself sinking again. It is an almost impossible task while you are clutching the huge jewel, and in despair, you release it, to give you two free hands.

You manage to remove your shield, and struggle to take off your sword belt. . . but the surface is getting farther away, becoming indistinct . . . your air is exhausted, and water rushes into your lungs . . . your quest is over.

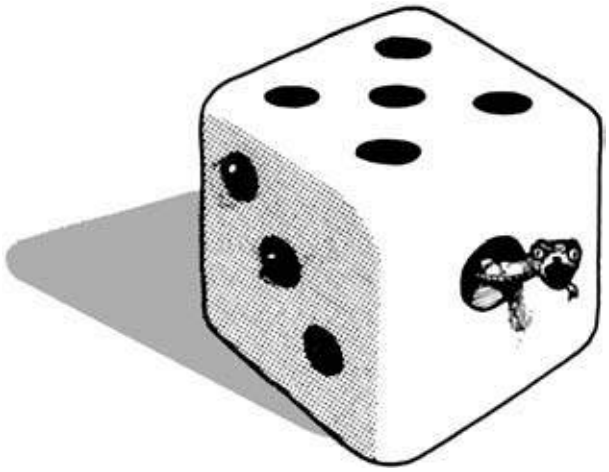


13

The road runs due North for some time, and you hurry along the pot-holed surface, keeping in the centre of the road as far as possible, your hand on your sword-hilt.

Eventually, it turns to the West, and after a short time, you reach a junction. Will you now:

Continue West?	Turn to **69**
Take the road South?	Turn to **88**



14

A short distance North, you see that there is a corridor off to your left. It looks familiar, and peering further North, you are sure that ahead of you is the corridor that, a short time before, you came down, going South. It seems that you have a simple choice here: you can either take the passage West again, but this time turn North at the end of it – turn to **95**; or you can turn round and press on further South – turn to **108**.

15

You begin to wonder at the wisdom of your decision, as you climb over small piles of rubble, and avoid gaping cracks in the road. However, the surface soon improves a little, and you stop as you notice e rather narrow alleyway on your left. Will you:

Try the way West?	Turn to **70**
Continue North?	Turn to **125**

16

North, your way is soon blocked by a door which stretches the full width of the corridor. There are no inscriptions of any kind on the door, and no obvious way to open it. The spell of Intuition could well be of use here: if you have this spell, and wish to use it, turn to **171**. Otherwise, you will have to go back South – turn to **149**.

17

Stepping over the body of the dead Tigron, you press on, and are relieved when the alleyway turns almost at once West, and you can see lights, and a junction in the distance. You quickly reach the junction, and stop to get your bearings. You are on a main North–South road, and in the far distance, to the North, you can just make out the Inn.

This seems to be a quiet part of town, with people strolling peacefully in the early evening half-light. You put your sword away, and set off down the road South; but even as you are walking, you can hear what sounds like someone calling your name softly, ahead of you – turn to **64**.

18

You dash along a quiet street for some distance, until, breathless, you stop at a junction. You know that Fallagon's men cannot be far behind, and you must make a decision quickly. Will you go:

North? Turn to **105**
South? Turn to **142**

19

As you set off East, Aalandrin turns and sets off in the opposite direction. Clearing your mind of everything but the purpose of your quest, you go East along the empty corridor, using your power of Seeing in the inky blackness to keep an eye on the walls either side, as well as the way ahead. You quickly arrive at a junction; will you:

Continue East? Turn to **189**
Take the new way South? Turn to **9**

20

The corridor remains devoid of any features, and quickly turns to the East. You follow the way East for some time, until you notice a passage on your left. Will you:

Take the way North? Turn to **134**
Continue East? Turn to **101**

21

When you have recovered your breath and patched up your wound as best you can, you continue East. After a short time, the corridor takes a sharp turn to the South, and you follow it until you have to stop at what looks like a dead-end. Turn to **96**.

22

You pass through the doorway, and into a corridor South. You follow this for a long time before you come to a junction: there is a new passage to your left. Will you now:

Take the way East? Turn to **194**
Continue South? Turn to **187**

23

Casting the spell, you feel your body become lighter than air, and you float slowly above the crumbling floorboards, coming to rest again immediately in front of the door. Turn to **63**.

24

Acting as quickly as you can, you take the gold key from your backpack and insert it into the lock. To your immense relief, it turns easily, and you run together through the door, closing it again on the oven-like heat behind you. You both breathe a sigh of relief, and you put the gold key back in your backpack, and look around. You are in a small room, obviously unused. There are a few sticks of broken furniture, and a number of chests, jars and bottles. Aalandrin is already exploring, looking into and under everything, quickly and methodically. A jar rattles, and he passes it to you as he continues his search. Cautiously, you rattle it yourself, and then, holding it at arm's length, turn it upside-down. A single silver key drops out, and you pick it up. It is quite plain, but you put it in your backpack, as Aalandrin completes his search. "Nothing more," he says curtly, and strides over to the opposite wall. There is a small door in the North wall, and though it opens easily, Aalandrin has to crouch to see

beyond. After only a moment, he ducks through it, beckoning you to follow.

Once through the door, you find you can walk normally, as the passage goes North a short distance, and then turns West, ending soon at another door. Aalandrin tries the door: it opens, and you follow him through. You are in an extremely small room, and as you enter, you see a demonic creature, seated on an ornate chair, before a stone table; short horns sprout from his forehead, and he has a trident in his hand. The Mutant Dwarf grins evilly at you, as you both prepare for action.

"Come for the Sceptre, have we?" he hisses. "No Sceptre for you, no. Death now."

Before you can blink, Aalandrin has drawn his sword, and strikes at the Mutant Dwarf. But the Dwarf can move with alarming speed, and Aalandrin's sword slices only into the empty chair.

You feel a stab of pain in your back, and instantly turn to see the Dwarf grinning at you, trident in hand. Your leather armour has protected you from his short stab, but both your back and your pride are bruised. You at once draw your own sword, and close in battle with the Dwarf. The fight is short, as he knocks you to the ground with a sudden surprise kick from one of his cloven feet. Lose one Strength point.

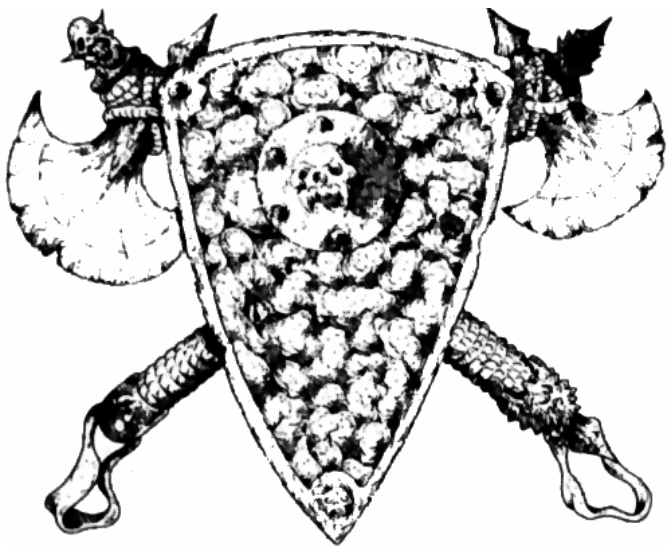
Dazed, you can only watch as Aalandrin and the Dwarf meet in combat. Aalandrin's agility is equal to the Dwarfs as they battle, and Aalandrin manages to get in one good blow with his sword; the Mutant Dwarf falls to the floor, and Aalandrin reaches for his bow and quiver. As he does so, the Dwarfs face lights up, and he hurls his trident with all his strength and deadly accuracy into Aalandrin's chest.

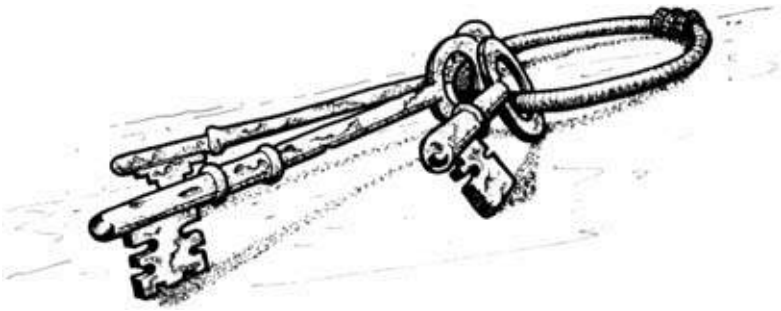
You stumble to your feet, still slightly dazed, as Aalandrin crumples, and confront the Dwarf. Wounded, he is not so agile, or strong, as he gets to his feet, drawing a dagger from his sleeve. "No Sceptre," he hisses again, "now death for you."

Clear-headed, you advance, calmly, but with furious intent. The fight begins.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MUTANT DWARF:	8	8

If you win, turn to **56**.

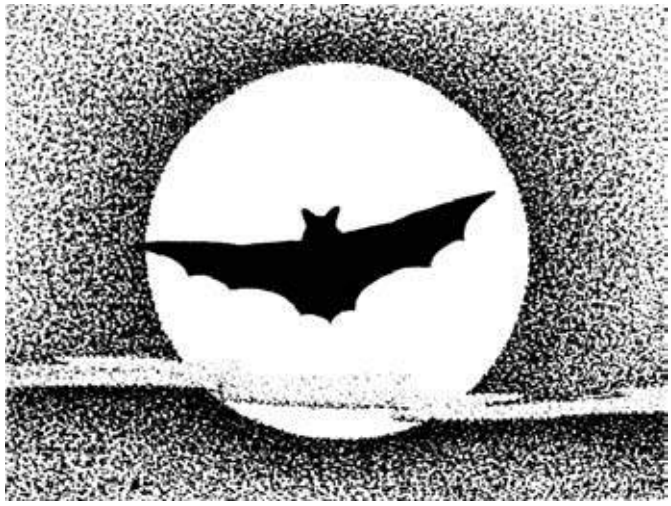




25

The way West turns fairly soon to the North, and as you turn to your right, you can see a red glow in the distance ahead of you. As you get closer, you realise that it is in fact a wall of silent flame, stretching the full width of the corridor, and dancing high up into the darkness. The heat is intense, and you have to take a couple of steps backwards, as you think about what to do now. It is obvious that you are not going to be able to cross this barrier of fearful heat by any normal means, though perhaps magic might help.

Looking upwards again, you think about the spell of Flight – you cannot see the ceiling, and it is quite possible that you will be able to fly over this barrier. If you have this spell, and wish to risk using it, turn to **143**. Your only other alternative is to go back South – turn to **68**.



26

You head quickly North, sword in hand; the street is quiet, and you very soon reach a crossroads, unchallenged. But even as you stop to consider which way to go now, there is a shout from ahead, and you see more of Fallagon's small private army break into a run towards you. South, back to the Inn, is out of the question, and so you have to make a fast decision. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **190**
West?	Turn to **178**

27

The corridor continues West, but fairly soon turns to your left. You press on South until you see a new passage to your right. Will you:

Continue South?	Turn to **89**
Try the way West?	Turn to **25**

28

As you approach, you see the cause of the movement – it is a short humanoid, whose skin is a patchwork of leather pieces, sewn together. It has a club and a sword, and its swings with these weapons become more frantic as you get closer, and lessen as you back away. This is the KILSWIPE of legend, a creature with no brain, but whose movements are triggered by the approach of any being.

You step back a few more paces to consider. Your opponent is fast, and difficult to kill, and perhaps magic might be a better idea than a fight. Any of the following spells, if you have them, could be useful: Shield – turn to **97**; Invisibility – turn to **182**; Circle of Darkness – turn to **147**. If you have none of these, or you prefer to fight hand-to-hand, turn to **126**.

29

You eye the door warily, and draw your sword. A slight, experimental push opens the door a few inches, though not enough to see what lies beyond. Will you:

Open the door fully? Turn to **179**

Leave it, and continue East? Turn to **57**

30

You hurry North, past the body of Kathep, and back to the junction. North, there are angry voices, and a number of shadowy figures running towards you: quickly heading West, you see the lights of the Inn not far distant, and when you see that there is a road to the South, you turn that way at once, putting distance between yourself and the Inn. Turn to **116**.

31

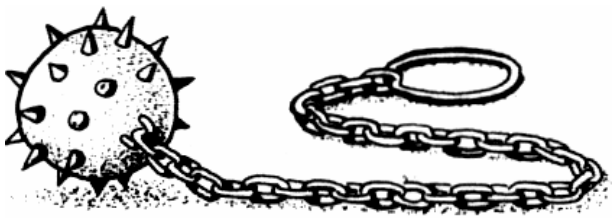
Past the KILSWIPE, the corridor continues West for some distance further, before turning sharply South. You walk South a long way, unchallenged, until there is a sharp turning East; a short way East, the passage finally ends at a junction. Will you now go:

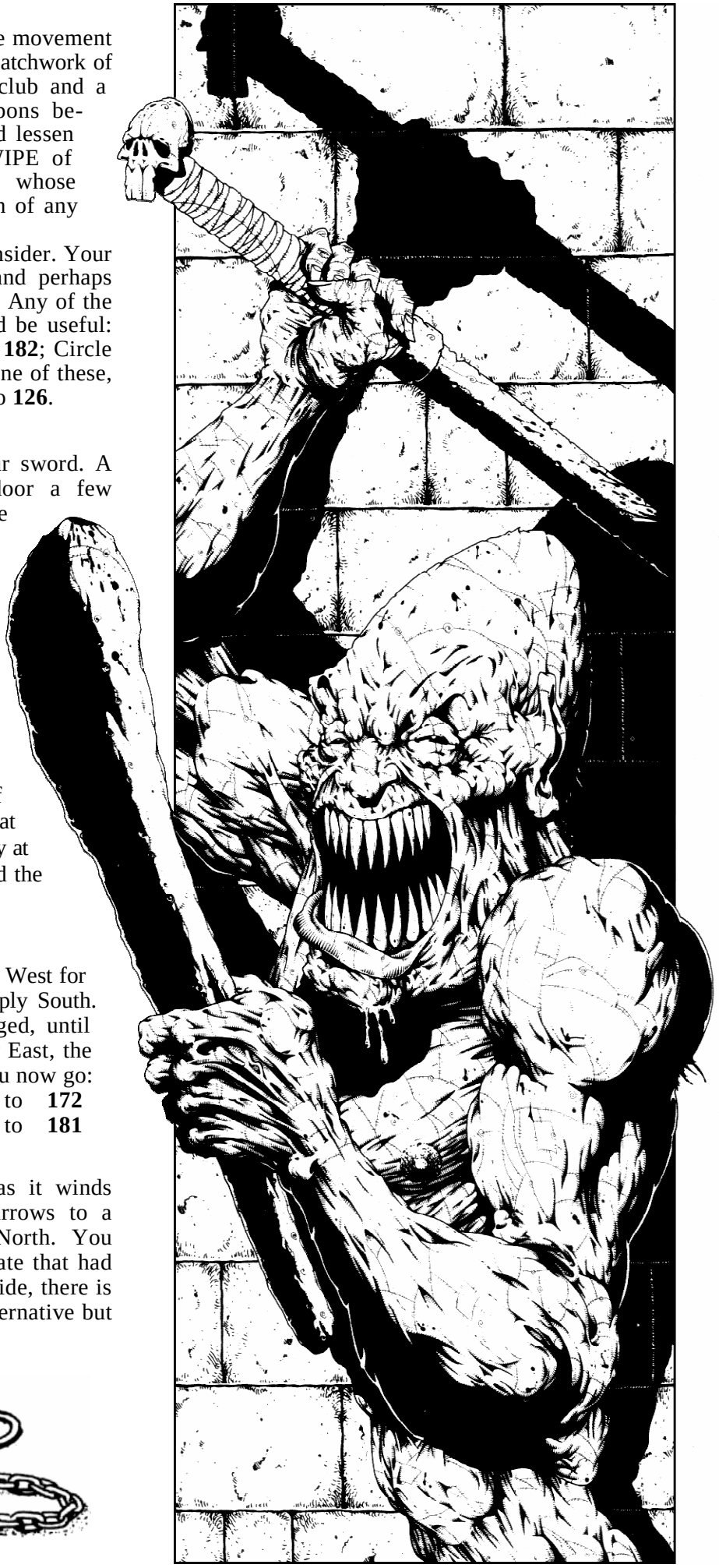
North? Turn to **172**

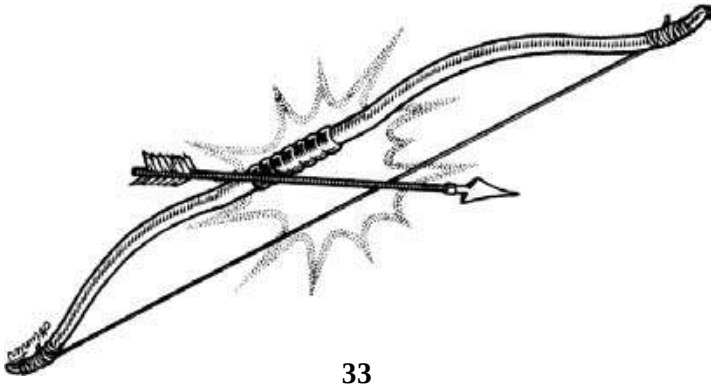
South? Turn to **181**

32

The road gradually becomes familiar, as it winds West for some time, and gradually narrows to a poorly-made alleyway before turning North. You give an irritated sigh as you reach the gate that had ten handles on the other side. From this side, there is no way past the gate, and you have no alternative but to turn round and go back. Turn to **5**.







33

The AIRSNAKE dead at your feet, you go over to get a closer look at the objects it was guarding. You give a soft whistle as you pick one up, and see that it is, in fact, an uncut diamond, the size of a hen's egg. There are six of them altogether, and they must be worth a small fortune. You put them in your backpack before leaving the room to continue East – turn to **57**.

34

The rope is conveniently arm's length above your head, and you give it a couple of suspicious tugs. It seems firm, and, after sheathing your sword and swinging your shield round to your back, you gingerly take hold, and, pulling yourself up, start to swing hand-over-hand towards the door. Exactly half-way across, you feel something give, and your fears are realised as the rope abruptly snaps: you drop onto the crumbling floorboards, and straight through them, landing heavily on hard, sharp stones six feet below. Lose five Strength points.

Slowly recovering your senses, you manage to clamber out, and move slowly towards the door, testing each board before putting your full weight on it. Turn to **63**.

35

	Dexterity	*Strength*
GONDERAK:	10	12

If you win, turn to **103**.

36

You walk carefully West, testing each floorboard as you progress, and eventually the corridor turns sharply North, until it quite soon ends at another junction. Will you now take the way:

West?	Turn to **153**
East?	Turn to **165**

37

You continue on your way back West until it ends at a junction. Will you go:

North?	Turn to **135**
South?	Turn to **72**

38

The key fits perfectly into the lock, and you open the door to see that the corridor continues East. After some time, it turns sharply to the right, and you head South – turn to **155**.

39

You have not gone very far before the passage turns to the North, and after a short time, West again. The corridor West is a long and featureless one, and you hurry along it.

You are nearing the end of the corridor – it looks as though it turns South not far ahead – when you catch sight of a door in the wall, on your right. You stop to examine the door: there is no keyhole, there are no levers, and it does not give in the slightest though you push at it with all your might. It is made of dark wood, criss-crossed with metal bars, and you realise that only magic. may help you explore beyond it. If you are able to use the spell of Intuition, turn to **199**. If you do not possess this spell, or do not wish to try it here, you can only continue on your way West – turn to **27**.

40

Hurrying East, you realise that you are in the oldest part of Thorndrake, long since abandoned by almost everyone. There are stories of a terrible plague that afflicted this part of the town, causing hundreds of deaths and terrible disabilities. The only sound, apart from your own heart racing, is an occasional scampering as some small animal darts away into the shadows.

You have not gone far along the poor road when you see another road, to your right. Will you:

Try the way South?	Turn to **88**
Continue East?	Turn to **197**

41

The MALGAROTH stops dead as you cast the spell and seem to evaporate before its eyes. You take a quick look round the stable, but can see nothing of value, and decide to get out before the spell wears off. Walking back round the winding corridor, you can in fact, feel the spell wearing off, as you get back to the junction. This time, you decide to try the way North, as that is now the only unexplored route – turn to **172**.

42

Moving further into the small room, you stumble over a number of cobwebbed caskets, bottles and jars. Almost all are broken and empty, but an ornate china jug, and a jewelled casket catch your eye. Will you investigate:

The jewelled casket?	Turn to **110**
The ornate jar?	Turn to **2**

43

The spell works the moment you cast it. You suddenly are absolutely sure that it is safe to take the sapphire, and you confidently remove it from the right hand, and examine it admiringly.

A sound makes you look up – the door in the South wall has swung open. If you now wish to take the jewel from the other hand, turn to **120**; if you would rather leave it, and go straight through the door ahead, turn to **22**.

44

The horrific man-spider Arachom dead, you hack your way through the thick, clinging strands of web to explore the room further. You check the bodies cocooned in Arachom's web, but there are no signs of life – each empty shell provided, at some time, a gruesome meal for the creature. You soon abandon your search, having found nothing of value, and no clues as to where the Sceptre might be held, and go back out through the door to carry on East. Turn to **136**.

45

You have walked a fair way West, when your progress is again halted, this time by a solid iron door across the passage. There is no keyhole on this side, and your search for secret panels or levers is fruitless. Charging the door results only in a bruised shoulder, and you have finally to admit defeat. Turn to **49**.

46

You cast the spell, and watch in satisfaction as Gonderak's expression changes to one of amazement and rage. She cuts wildly through the air with her sword, but she obviously cannot see you, and you pass by her like a ghost – turn to **103**.

47

Shortly there is a way to your right. Your power of Seeing does not allow you to see very far, either ahead or to the West. However, a decision must be made. Will you:

Try the corridor West?	Turn to	**39**
Continue on your way South?	Turn to	**81**

48

The MALGAROTH is large, but clumsy, and you should defeat it, you feel, fairly easily.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
MALGAROTH:	8	12

If you win, you examine the stable, but there is nothing of value. The only thing to do is to go back along the winding corridor to the junction, and explore the way North this time – turn to **172**.

49

Retracing your footsteps, you have no option but to try the way South this time, when you arrive back at the junction – turn to **155**.

50

This spell is effective against most creatures. You become as insubstantial as a ghost; your opponent will be unable to see or harm you. In turn, you will be unable to harm your opponent, but the spell will enable you to slip past. The effect quickly wears off however. Cost: five Strength points. Turn to **115**.

51

The floor of the room is littered with cobwebbed caskets, bottles and jars, most of which are broken and empty. However, an ornate china jug, and a jewelled casket look more interesting. Will you investigate:

The jewelled casket?	Turn to	**160**
The ornate jar?	Turn to	**112**

52

The sharp heads of short spears appear in the openings either side of you, and you dive to the floor as they fly, whistling, towards you. They cross just above your back as you fall, and thud into the opposite walls. But you have no time for self-congratulation, as a sudden fierce pain in your calf makes you cry out. You twist round to see that your leg is pinned to the floor by a third spear, still quivering, and glance up to see another panel in the ceiling above.

Cursing, you force yourself round to take hold of the spear, and with immense effort and determination, wrench it out of the floorboard to release your leg. Sweating with pain, you slowly remove it from your leg and examine the wound. You see that you have been relatively lucky – the spear missed the bone, and just caught the edge of your calf. However, it is still a nasty injury, and costs you four Strength points. If you are still alive, you may now look at the statue more closely – turn to **154**.

53

The road goes North for a short time, and then West. There is no-one about, although some of the houses have lamps lit, as dusk gathers. You continue warily, until you reach a crossroads.

To the South, you can see the Inn, uncomfortably close; as you are considering the way North, you realise that the small body of men you have been watching approach from that direction for the last few seconds are Fallagon's men! There is a shout as one of them spots you, and you run off, continuing West. Turn to **178**.

54

You cast the spell and raise your hand, and the thin silver blade shoots from beneath your wrist as fast as light, burying itself in the AIRSNAKE's heart. For a brief second, the monster's face seems to register surprise, and then it drops to the floor in a crumpled heap. Turn to **33**.

55

You push tentatively at the door, and feel it give a little. Encouraged, you dig your heels in and drive the door steadily inwards with your shoulder until it is open far enough for you to look into the room beyond. The darkness is almost tangible, and even your power of Seeing penetrates only a few feet. You experience a momentary sense of claustrophobia before regaining full control of yourself; will you now:

Investigate the room further?	Turn to **42**
Leave, and continue East?	Turn to **123**

56

Stepping over the body of the Mutant Dwarf, you go over to look at Aalandrin, hoping desperately that he can even yet be saved. But it is too late: the trident is buried in the chest of the brave elf, there is no sign of life. With a mixture of anger and grief, you determine to recover the Sceptre at any cost, and walk quickly over to the West side of the small room, in which is a door.

Contemptuously kicking the door open, you pass through a short connecting passage. At the end of the passage is an archway, and you can see a jewelled chest glittering in the room beyond. Turn to **169**.

57

A short distance further on, you see a door on your right. Will you:

Try to open the door?	Turn to **67**
Ignore it, and continue East?	Turn to **136**

58

Your hand trembles slightly as you reach for the jewel – but the sapphire lifts easily away, and you relax your tensed muscles. A sudden noise makes you start, and you look up from the sapphire to see the door in the South wall swing open. Will you now take the jewel from the left hand? If so, turn to **120**; or will you leave through the door in the South wall? Turn to **22**.

59

Softly, you speak the words that Aalandrin taught you, and immediately feel yourself rising from the floor, until you brush the high ceiling. The power of the spell propels you forwards, and the air rushes past your face as you fly at great speed just above the flames. The heat makes you gasp for a second, but then you are past the wall of fire, and land safely beyond it. Slightly singed, but relatively unharmed, you hurry South, away from the flames. Turn to **68**.

60

This spell works against certain inanimate objects: for example, it can be of great value when searching for secret panels. Cost: two Strength points. Turn to **115**.

61

After a short time, you have to stop before a solid-looking door that completely seals off the way forward. There is no keyhole, you can see no levers or any other way to open it. You try giving the door a hard push, but there is no give at all.

Looking more closely, you see that the door is inlaid with thousands of small squares of black wood alternating with squares of white wood. You try pressing a few squares, to see if anything happens, but the door remains stubbornly shut. You realise that it is time for some magic, and that the spell of Intuition will be of value here. If you possess this spell and wish to try it, turn to **162**. Otherwise, the only thing you can do is turn round and head back North again – turn to **118**.

62

The vicious monster dead, you stop for a few moments to recover your breath after what has been a fierce battle. When you feel ready, you press on South, wary of every noise and shadow. But very soon, you have to stop at a solid wooden door across the corridor; you give the door a rather hopeful push, but to your surprise, it opens easily, and you go through, hearing it swing shut behind you.

After only a few paces, you stop – the moon is bright and clear, and you are standing on the edge of an area of deserted wasteland. You turn to see the back of the Temple behind you, and run back to the door: but it is firmly locked from this side. You have failed. You can recover your strength, and try again to find and return the Sceptre, but for the moment, your quest is over.

63

There is no obvious way to open the door, but when you push gently at it, the door swings invitingly wide open. Directly ahead, in the centre of the room, there is a small stone statue of a grotesque, humanoid character, holding out both arms sideways, the palms of the hands upwards. Beyond the statue, there is a door in the South wall.

Venturing warily into the room, you hear a faint click, and instantly suspect a trap: your fears are justified, as you see panels slide open in the walls on either side of you. If you possess the spell of Shield, turn to **130**. If not, turn to **52**.

64

The soft voice continues calling your name, and you move warily forwards. At the side of the road is a girl of stunning beauty, with a bow and a quiver of arrows strapped to her back – but there is no air of menace about her. Her gaze is hypnotic, and you are drawn irresistibly towards her.

"My name is Ravellia, and I am no friend to Fallagon and his clan," she whispers. "Go South, quickly – Fallagon's men are close behind you." She moves away into the shadows, and you suddenly snap back to reality. Was it an illusion? After only a few seconds' deliberation, you decide to heed her words, and hurry on South. Turn to **166**.

65

A small, controlled flame, or a large blaze can be created at will. Cost: three Strength points. Turn to **115**.

66

As you progress North, looking both to your left and right, you see that the walls of the corridor are lined with paintings, in ornate frames. Some are battle-scenes, some depict hideous creatures. You look more closely at one of the pictures – it seemed for a moment that the eyes moved! But on close inspection, it appears to be simply a painting; behind it is the corridor wall, and though you look suspiciously for any small holes or secret panels, you find nothing.

Putting the painting back, you continue, and soon there is a sharp left-hand turn. You have gone only a short distance West when you notice a door on your right. Will you:

Attempt to open the door?	Turn to **138**
Continue West?	Turn to **145**

67

Sword drawn, you push open the door and step into the gloom beyond. Your power of Seeing penetrates the blackness ahead of you, and you form the impression of being in a fair-sized room. Thick strands of a kind of sticky rope cross-cross the room, and you cut through them as you enter – and stop as the glow from your power of Seeing illuminates a horrific sight. You realise, as you gaze with horror at the creature in front of you, that you have been

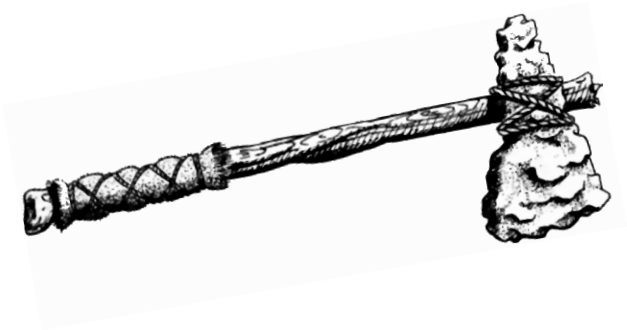
cutting the strands of a giant web: staring at you is a spider the size of a horse. But it is the head that holds your fascinated gaze: a ghastly humanoid face, the mouth slowly opening and closing, contemplates you, unblinking. It speaks: "Come in, Stranger," it gurgles. "Another meal for Arachom." At the very edge of the light, you can make out the remains of others who must have entered – mere husks of bodies, drained by this creature, wrapped tightly in the thick web.

Your attention diverted for a second, you are slow to react as Arachom scuttles closer and a strand of thick web whips round you. Cursing, you cut yourself free, as Arachom spits a jet of fluid. You dodge away just in time, but a few drops of the fluid spatter your face, burning like fire. Lose one Strength point. Arachom scuttles back again, and you must now choose whether to try magic, or fight in the normal way. The following spells may be effective, if you have them: Invisibility – turn to **92**; Circle of Darkness – turn to **85**. To fight with your sword and shield, turn to **74**.

68

The corridor South soon turns to the East, and, after a short time, ends at a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to	**76**
South?	Turn to	**89**



69

The road West seems to be a long one, but a short distance down the road, you see a way to your right. If you wish to take this new way North, turn to **32**. If you prefer to continue West, turn to **94**.

70

The alleyway gradually widens as you walk along, and you soon find yourself crossing desolate, derelict wasteland. You begin to feel extremely vulnerable, and are relieved when you reach a proper road. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to	**98**
South?	Turn to	**86**

71

You will know, for certain, the correct thing to do when faced with more than one course of action. Cost: two Strength points. Turn to **115**.

72

As you walk South, you can see a red glow in the distance, and, as you approach it, you have to stop and shield your face: in front of you, across the full width of the corridor, is a wall of silent fire. Neither the floorboards themselves, nor the walls are burning, but nevertheless the heat from the barricade of dancing red flames is intense.

You take a couple of steps back, and think; you have no idea how far this wall of flame extends, and only briefly consider trying to run through it – you would be burnt to a crisp in a second. If you have the spell of Flight, and wish to risk using it here, turn to **59**. The only other thing you can do is to go back North – turn to **188**.

73

This road deteriorates almost at once into an unmarked track across rubbish-strewn, derelict wasteland, and you hurry East, relieved when after a time the track becomes a narrow alleyway between rotting, deserted old houses. The alley ends at a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **125**
South?	Turn to **129**

74

Because Arachom has two means of attack – the web to snare you with, and the fiery fluid to spit at you, deduct four Strength points from your current total, rather than the usual two, for each round you lose in this fight. Now resolve your battle:

	Dexterity	*Strength*
ARACHOM:	10	8

If you win, turn to **44**.

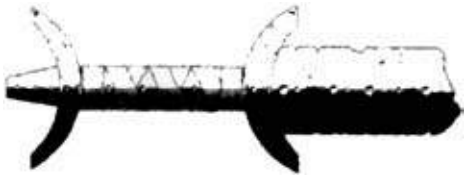
75

You wait, alert to danger. There is a blood-curdling, manic laugh, and then into view steps a figure whose features chill you to the bone: the complete left side of his skull is missing, as is part of his shoulder. But he is well-muscled, wearing no armour, only leggings of animal hide. He wields a double-bladed axe as he approaches, and you realise that you are facing Tyran himself.

His voice is rasping, as he tells you that this room is protected against magic of any kind. Saliva drips from his chin as he approaches, and he is obviously looking forward to this fight. But although he is powerfully built, you have the advantage of your light armour, shield, and natural agility, and you prepare for battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
TYRAN:	10	16

If you defeat Tyran, turn to **198**.



76

You walk North for a short distance, until the corridor turns to the right. A short way along, you stop as you catch sight of a door on your left; looking closely, it is obvious that it is not going to be easy to open – it is made of solid-looking wood, criss-crossed with bars of metal, and an experimental push confirms that it is firmly locked. The spell of Intuition could be useful here: if you are able to use this spell and wish to do so, turn to **128**. Otherwise, you will have to continue on your way East – turn to **183**.

77

Walking watchfully West, you stop when you see that there is a route to the North. Will you:

Try the passage North?	Turn to **134**
Continue West?	Turn to **36**

78

The elf straps a thin, silver blade beneath your wrist. He tells you that you have only to raise your hand, and the Wrist Knife will fly to the heart of any airborne opponent. Cost: four Strength points. Turn to **115**.

79

You approach the main door of the Temple with care, and stop as you see that there are three brass plates set into the door. On each is written: "To enter, press here." The plate on the left has the number 44 inscribed in it, the centre plate has the number 122, and the right-hand plate, the number 88. "Tyran is playing games," says Aalandrin, angrily. "We can be sure that only one of these is safe to touch."

As you consider which plate to try, you sense movement behind you, and swing round to see a Goblin, axe raised to strike. Immediately, you raise your shield, and the Goblin's axe thuds harmlessly into it. As you draw your sword, Aalandrin calls sharply, "Wait!" You step back, surprised, and watch in wonder as the elf steps forwards and mumbles a few words, passing his hands over the Goblin's eyes. The Goblin becomes quite still, his eyes glazed. "Now," the elf says to him, "which plate will gain us entrance to the Temple?"

After a short silence, the Goblin speaks: "Twice the number on the left-side plate," he mumbles, slowly, "added to the difference between the others, is the one that is safe. The others kill." Aalandrin sighs. "Even under my control, he talks nonsense," he says, and turns back to contemplate the door.

But elves, of course, although they have many skills, are not noted for their ability at arithmetic. You tell Aalandrin that you know which plate is safe, and he looks at you in surprise. When you have worked it out, turn to the section with that number.

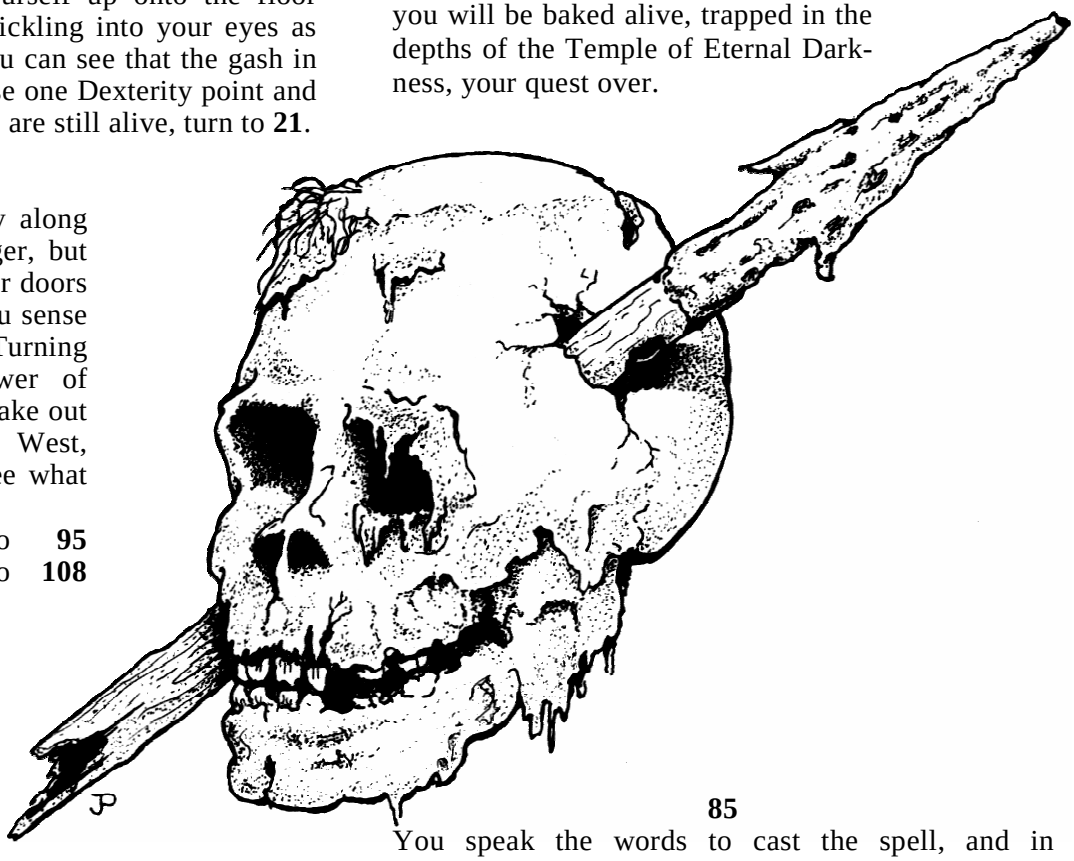
80

Because the floorboards at your feet are so rotten, you dare not risk much of a run-up before your jump. Taking a deep breath, you take a few short strides before leaping with all your might, willing yourself to make it to the other side: but you are just short, and the protruding floorboards thud into your chest. Desperately, you scramble for a hold as you feel yourself falling into the pit below. Your chest is painful and you can feel blood trickling down to your waist. But you have a hand-hold, and slowly, determinedly, you haul yourself up onto the floor beyond the pit. Sweat is trickling into your eyes as you gasp for breath, and you can see that the gash in your chest is a bad one. Lose one Dexterity point and three Strength points. If you are still alive, turn to **21**.

81

After continuing some way along the corridor, alert for danger, but also keeping an eye open for doors or passages, you stop as you sense an opening to your right. Turning the glow from your power of Seeing that way, you can make out a short, narrow corridor West, though you cannot quite see what is at the end of it. Will you:

Go West?	Turn to	**95**
Continue South?	Turn to	**108**



82

This spell enables you to soar over any obstacle, and could be very useful in the task ahead of you. Cost: three Strength points. Turn to **115**.

83

You have not gone far South, when you see a passage to your right. Will you:

Continue South?	Turn to	**192**
Take the way West?	Turn to	**77**

84

The corridor very soon turns left, and you walk North. You stop and draw your sword, as you see a cloaked and hooded figure ahead. But as you creep up, the figure whirls round - and a familiar voice greets you. You sheathe your sword and run forwards as Aalandrin smiles. But his expression almost at once becomes serious again, as he realises that you have not yet discovered the Sceptre. "Hurry," he urges, "I am sure we are close to our goal now, but the way is blocked."

A little further North, you see what he means. A solid brass door closes off the corridor. "I have tried all I know," sighs Aalandrin, "but I cannot open it." Looking closer, you see that there is a keyhole in the door, set in a square of gold. "Somewhere," says Aalandrin, "there must be a key." But at that second, a crash from behind makes you both wheel round. A metal wall has dropped, sealing off the way back – and as you watch, it begins to glow, dull-red at first, but soon more brightly. The temperature is rising quickly, and you begin to gasp as the air heats up. Have you got a golden key? If so, turn to **24**. If not, you will be baked alive, trapped in the depths of the Temple of Eternal Darkness, your quest over.

85

You speak the words to cast the spell, and in moments an impenetrable black cloud encircles you. After a second or two, however, you realise that you can see through the Circle: wherever you swing your power of Seeing, it becomes transparent. Watching Arachom, though, it is obvious that he cannot see you, as he spits wildly into the cloud. The spell will soon wear off, but for the moment, you have the advantage. Increase your Fighting Power by three points for the first two rounds of this battle, and turn to **74**.

86

The road continues South for a short time, before turning East. The road East is long, and the most dilapidated that you have yet seen: in places the wooden houses have rotted and collapsed into the road, and you have to pick your way through the rubble.

You are relieved when you notice a new road to your left, but a quick glance along it tells you it is in no better repair than the one you are travelling. Will you:

Try the road North?	Turn to	**15**
Continue East?	Turn to	**184**

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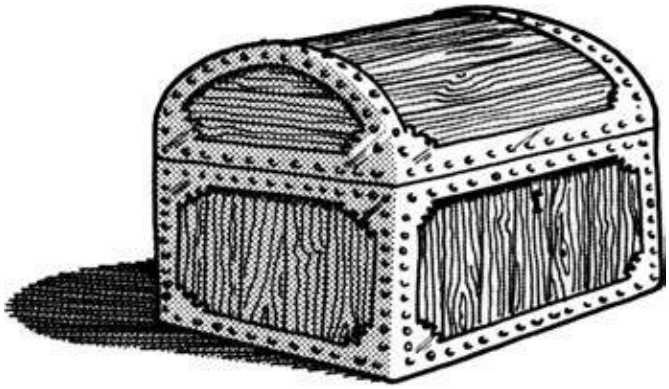


87

After going South for a while, the corridor turns East. Following the way East, you look up to see that you are passing under some kind of bridge, as the passage continues East for a short time, before turning sharply North. Quite soon it turns again, to the West this time, finally ending at a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **14**
South?	Turn to **127**

88

Walking at a brisk, wary pace down the dark and threatening road, you soon become aware of a rather narrow alley on your right. Will you:

Continue South?	Turn to **129**
Take the way West?	Turn to **70**

89

Only a few paces down the corridor, you stop – at the very edge of the light afforded by your power of Seeing, there seems to be someone moving. You are about to rush forwards, thinking that you have rejoined Aalandrin, when some inner sense urges caution, and you draw your sword before continuing slowly.

As you approach, you see a young woman with long, flowing black hair, dressed in a short tunic, and wielding a curved sword. At her belt are a short axe and a dagger. Unsure of yourself, you hesitate, and she smiles. “Welcome, Stranger,” she says, “I am called Gonderak.” You lower your sword, and as you do so are taken completely by surprise as she drives her sword at you. Your leather armour protects you from the full force of the blow, but you realise that you are slightly injured – lose one Strength point.

Swiftly regaining your composure, you raise your sword and shield, as Gonderak gives a wild laugh and slices through the air again, her sword-blow deflected by your shield. You take a step back, and consider using some magic. You may use, if you have them, any of the following spells: Circle of Darkness – turn to **137**; Invisibility – turn to **46**; Shield – turn to **140**; Wrist Knife – turn to **176**. Alternatively, you may choose to fight to the death, hand to hand: if so, turn to **35**.

90

You hurry West, nerves tingling, looking as far ahead of you as your power of Seeing will allow. But you are not watching your feet, and as a trapdoor opens in the floor in front of you, you drop heavily into a small, damp basement. Lose one Dexterity point and three Strength points. If you are still alive, turn to **11**.

91

You dash headlong through the doorway, heading East. But you have gone only a short distance before you stop suddenly in your tracks – there is a road to the South. You stand at the junction, sword in hand, and look quickly around. You need to make a fast decision. Will you:

Continue East?	Turn to **151**
Take the new road South?	Turn to **116**

92

The spell works the moment you cast it, and you slip back out of the room like a ghost, leaving Arachom to wonder what happened to his meal! You press on East, as you feel the spell gradually wearing off – turn to **136**.

93

Wasting no time, you step over the body, and push past the small knot of spectators that has gathered. You are quickly out of sight, as the road turns West again almost at once. In the distance ahead, you can see a junction, and walk swiftly towards it.

As you approach, it becomes apparent that this is a more prosperous part of the town: the streets are already well-lit, and you watch from the shadows in the junction the contented, ordinary people enjoying the evening, unaware of the fugitive nearby.

You hear a voice, and strain to listen more carefully: from the other side of the road, slightly to the North, someone is calling your name, softly. Turn to **64**.

94

You realise, as you walk along the dirty, uncared-for street, that you are in the oldest part of town. There are few lights, and no people about – this part of Thorndrake was left to the weeds, the rats, and any other creatures that cared to roam the streets some years ago, after a terrible plague. The metal gate to the North sealed the area off.

You are thinking about these old tales of disease and terrible numbers of dead when the road turns sharply South. You quicken your pace, wanting to get clear of this part of town, and soon arrive at a new way – there is a road to your left. Will you:

Continue South?	Turn to **86**
Take the road East?	Turn to **73**

95

Only a few yards West, the corridor ends at a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **6**
South?	Turn to **87**

96

Examining the wall ahead more closely, you see that the wall has an inscription, which reads:

"There are more days in a year than hours in a week. The difference is greater than the Number to Pass by the number of hours in a day."

You realise that you have come across another of Tyran's deadly games, designed to deter intruders. And even as you think about it, you hear a faint sound behind you, and turn to see that a solid door has slid across, effectively imprisoning you in a tiny cell. You will have to work out the answer to Tyran's puzzle, or slowly die of starvation. When you have worked it out, turn to the section with the same number as the Number to Pass. Your only other chance is to try the spell of Knowing, if you have it: if you wish to risk this, turn to **195**.

97

You speak the words taught to you by Aalandrin, and the spell is cast. You are completely protected from the KILSWIPE's blows for the first three rounds of battle. Turn to **126**.

98

Not far North, the road bends East, and you press on until you see that there is a road off to the North. Will you go:

North?	Turn to	**32**
Continue East?	Turn to	**40**

99

Taking a deep breath, you reach out for the fourth handle and turn it – it is your last memory as a blinding, fiery pain spreads out from your chest into the whole of your body, as though you are being consumed by fire from within. You have failed in your quest.

100

The fight over, you put away your bloody sword. Aalandrin has won his fight easily, and now wants to hurry on. You continue South together at a brisk pace – turn to **132**.

101

You have walked only a short distance, when you reach a junction. Will you go:

North?	Turn to	**117**
South?	Turn to	**192**

102

Quietly, you chant the incantation that Aalandrin taught you, and as you say the last word, you find that you suddenly feel as light as air. A small gasp of wonder escapes your lips as you float up and over the black pit below, and come back gently to the floor, safely beyond it. Encouraged, you continue East until, fairly soon, the corridor turns right. You follow the way South until you have to stop at what appears to be a dead-end. Turn to **96**.

103

As you walk, your sword at the ready, you stumble, and look down. The floorboards are rotten and crumbling, and looking ahead, you can see that they are in even worse condition. However, you can also make out a door in the distance, across the corridor, and move towards it, trying to step only on the sound boards. But very soon, there are no more good floorboards left, only a stretch of decaying, dusty, crumbling boards between you and the door. As you stand, examining the way ahead, you become aware of a rope above you: it is fixed to the wall above your right shoulder, and stretches diagonally across the corridor, ending in the wall on the left side of the door.

Looking first at the crumbling floorboards, and then at the rope again, you are not sure that you trust either. There are a number of things you could do: if you wish to risk walking across the floor, turn to **119**; if you would rather risk swinging across, hand-over-hand on the rope, turn to **34**. If you have the necessary spells, you could use the spell of Flight – turn to **23**; or the spell of Knowing – turn to **170**.

104

Only a short distance further West, you notice that there is again a route South. Your power of Seeing enables you to just make out that this appears to be a short corridor, ending at a junction. Will you:

Take the way South?	Turn to	**9**
Continue West?	Turn to	**10**

105

Moving quickly North, you are not challenged, and soon the road turns sharply to the East. You continue East until you reach a crossroads, where you stop to consider which way to go next. Not far to the South, you can see the Inn, and sudden shouts from the way North decide things for you. Some of Fallagon's men have circled round ahead of you, and you have been seen! Turn to **190**.

106

Runic and other foreign characters will immediately make sense to you when you use this spell. Cost: two Strength points. Turn to **115**.

107

Gingerly, you reach out for the fourth handle, close your eyes and' turn it – and let out a gasp of relief as the metal gate opens, and you go through, closing the gate behind you. Turn to **5**.

108

You soon arrive at another junction: this time there is a passage to your left. In the distance South, at the edge of the light afforded by your power of Seeing, is what appears to be a wooden bridge. Will you:

Continue South?	Turn to **127**
Try the way East?	Turn to **114**

109

Walking West, your progress is impeded by the terrible state of this road. In places, whole houses have simply rotted away and collapsed into the street, and there is an appalling stench in the air. You pick your way as best you can through the rubble, until the road turns North, where conditions are not quite so bad.

Not far North, there is another way off to your tight. It does not look very inviting, but you consider that it cannot be much better or worse than anywhere else. Will you:

Take the road East?	Turn to **73**
Continue North?	Turn to **98**

110

There appears to be no keyhole or lock on the casket, and you warily lift the lid with the tip of your sword. As the lid rises, you catch your breath – the glow from your power of Seeing is reflected from thousands of gold coins! You move forward and dig into the treasure with your cupped hands. Much as you would like to take all the gold, it is much too heavy to carry – you cannot even lift the chest. You content yourself with a few handfuls, but even so you are weighed down, and it will cost you one Strength point to carry the gold. Will you now:

Leave, and continue East?	Turn to **123**
Investigate the ornate jar?	Turn to **2**

111

Without magic, your chances of defeating such a fast and lethal foe are slim: but you have no choice, and adopt your fighting stance.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
AIRSNAKE:	13	12

If you survive, turn to **33**.

112

You push your hand into the jar, and give a muffled cry as you feel a painful bite, and then another, even as you instantly pull your hand out. A small poisonous spider has its fangs sunk deep into your hand, and you angrily shake it off. The jar, you see, contains a nest of them, but your attention is distracted from the jar by the pain in your hand. It is fast beginning to swell up, and will take some time to be fully useful again. Lose four Strength points and, if you are still alive, you leave the room to continue West – turn to **145**.

113

You have not gone far along the road West when you notice that there is another way to your right. Will you:

Continue West?	Turn to **109**
Take the road North?	Turn to **15**

114

The corridor goes East for a short time, and then turns sharply South. A little further on, it turns to your right, and you follow the way West, under the wooden bridge you saw earlier, and then the corridor swings abruptly North. You press on North for a while, until you get to a new junction: there is a short corridor to your right. Will you:

Continue North?	Turn to **6**
Try the way East?	Turn to **158**

115

Swiftly, the elf lists nine spells he can teach you, though there will be time to learn only four. Further, because you do not have the elves' inborn magical ability, for you each spell will work only *once*, and may sap your Strength. Do you now wish to learn the spell of:

Flight?	Turn to **82**
Invisibility?	Turn to **50**
Knowing?	Turn to **71**
Translate?	Turn to **106**
Circle of Darkness?	Turn to **121**
Create Fire?	Turn to **65**
Wrist Knife?	Turn to **78**
Intuition?	Turn to **60**
Shield?	Turn to **141**

In each case, you will be told to return to this section after you have learnt your chosen spell. Note down each spell and its *Strength* cost on your Quest Sheet. Deduct the cost from your *Strength* score at the time you cast the spell. When you have learnt four spells, turn to **124**.

116

Hurrying South, you begin to wonder whether you have made the right decision. The road quickly deteriorates into a pot-holed track, and you have to tread warily. Either side of the track are only abandoned hovels, broken doors and windows flapping in the freshening breeze. Rats, scavenging among the rubbish, and mangy, snarling dogs appear for a moment, and are gone. The light slowly fades, as dusk falls, and the air is filled with menace.

Glowing eyes follow your progress from the shadows, and you move slowly, warily – and stop. To your right, is a deep, hungry growl, and a huge beast pads into view, ready to spring. With the forequarters of a tiger, and the hindquarters of a lion, the TIGRON is fast and powerful. As it leaps at you, you raise your shield and prepare to fight.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
TIGRON:	10	12

If you win, turn to **17**.

117

You can soon see that the way ahead ends at a junction, and you stop when you reach it to look to left and right. The way West stretches some distance into shadow, while the Eastern corridor appears to take a sharp turning right not far in the distance. Will you now go:

East? Turn to **168**
West? Turn to **104**

118

After walking a short way North, you become aware of a corridor on your left. Will you:

Take the new way West? Turn to **90**
Continue North? Turn to **66**

119

Surprisingly, the floor takes your weight, though you move forward with great care, testing each step forward before putting your full weight on it. Holding your breath, you approach the door, agonisingly slowly. Turn to **63**.

120

As you touch the glittering jewel, the stone hand of the statue snaps shut, trapping your own hand! You try desperately to wrench it free as the statue's grip increases remorselessly, steadily crushing your hand. The room dissolves into a haze as you faint with pain.

Slowly, you regain consciousness, unable to think or even see properly, as waves of agony wash over you; your hand is crushed and useless, and your only hope now is that somehow you can escape from the cursed Temple, to recover, regain your strength and fitness, and, perhaps, try again to recover the Sceptre. For now, your quest is over.

121

A black cloud will encircle you for a short time, making you very difficult for an opponent to hit – but to you, the cloud will be transparent, and you can strike out through it at your attacker. Cost: three Strength points. Turn to **115**.

122

As you press the plate, the door swings silently open. Ahead, it is pitch-black – even the light from the full moon stops abruptly at the entrance. You move through the door, into a corridor that goes due South for a short distance. Your power of Seeing comes fully into its own now, as you look around: the walls are bare, panelled oak, and as you look ahead again, you can see that the corridor ends at a junction. You walk to this junction, and stop. "I think," says Aalandrin, "that it would be better if we split up here. No doubt we shall meet again later. Decide which way to go now, and I shall take the opposite direction."

You feel saddened, and suddenly alone, but you can recognise the sense in what he says, and reluctantly agree. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **19**
West?	Turn to **193**

123

Fairly soon, the way East ends, as the corridor takes a sharp turn to your right. You walk cautiously South, your power of Seeing lighting up the way ahead of you, and to left and right, as you continue, watching for traps. You have the uncanny feeling that you are being observed as you move slowly forwards, and then realise that the walls are lined with paintings. Some are scenes of battles, some depict demonic figures whose eyes seem to follow you as you walk. You stop, hand on sword-hilt, and examine the pictures more closely. But all is still, and you continue South until you see a passage to your right. Will you now:

Take the way West?	Turn to **90**
Continue South?	Turn to **61**

124

You are as well-prepared now as you are ever going to be in your quest for the Sceptre of the Elvenking, and you quickly hurry South together. But you have travelled only a short distance when Aalandrin stops in his tracks and holds up his hand. "There is an ambush prepared," he whispers, and you both draw your swords and press quietly onwards.

Your respect for Aalandrin's powers increases as, after only a few more yards of travel, there is a sudden flurry of movement from the trees on either side of the road, and two Dwarfs rush at you, shouting and screaming. One carries a warhammer, and the other a short spear, and you note their

twisted bodies and features as you prepare for action. Aalandrin is similarly prepared, and will fight one of the Dwarfs. Choose which of the two you will engage in battle, and, if you win, turn to **100**.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
FIRST DWARF:	8	8
SECOND DWARF:	9	10

125

The air feels oppressive, and you hurry North until you reach a junction, not far distant. Will you now go:

East? Turn to **197**
West? Turn to **69**

126

Resolve your battle:

	Dexterity	*Strength*
KILSWIPE:	11	12

If you win, turn to **31**.

127

Ahead of you, there is some kind of wooden bridge, with steps carved into it. You test the first step with your foot, and it feels sound, but you are uneasy. However, there is no other way forward, and so, gingerly, you climb up. Slightly to your surprise, you cross quite safely, noting that you have passed over a passage running East-West below.

Encouraged, you press on South for some distance, until the corridor abruptly reaches a dead-end. Angrily, you punch the wall ahead of you – and it instantly slides silently aside. Wondering, you walk a pace forward, and the door slides as silently shut again.

You are standing at a junction. There is a corridor on your right, or you could continue South. Will you now go:

West? Turn to **45**
South? Turn to **155**

128

Quietly, you chant the short incantation for the spell, as taught to you by Aalandrin, and as you do so, one of the panels in the wall to the right of the door increasingly draws your attention.

Stepping forward, you touch the panel, and at once the door silently swings open. Looking cautiously inside, you see that the small room is quite empty, except for an iron key hanging from a hook on the wall opposite. Swiftly, you move in to take it, and at once dart back out into the corridor.

The door silently closes again, and, putting the iron key into your backpack, you continue on your way East – turn to **183**.

129

The way South is short, but the road is particularly bad, and you have to scramble over small piles of rubble, and avoid gaping cracks in the road. It ends at an East–West junction. If you wish to go East, turn to **184**. If you would rather try the way West, turn to **109**.

130

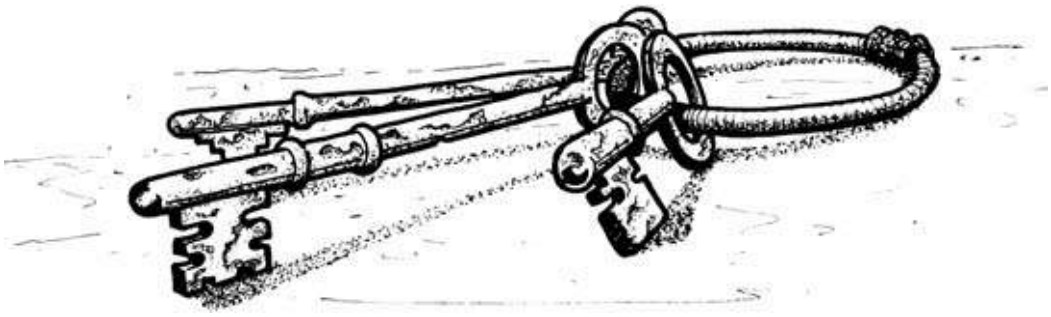
You gabble the few words to cast the spell of Shield as you see the heads of short spears appear from the openings either side of you. They fly towards you with deadly speed and accuracy – then bounce away and clatter to the floor barely a foot from your body, as though they had struck a wall.

You suddenly realise that there are *three* spears on the floor, and look up to see a third panel above your head. Relieved, you silently thank the elf for his gifts of magic, before moving to examine the statue more closely – turn to **154**.

131

The damp, smelly basement is tiny, and a quick look around shows you that there is nothing to investigate. You look up, to discover that the floorboards of the corridor are only just above your head. With some effort you haul yourself out and up, to continue on your way East. Ahead of you, the corridor ends at a North-South junction. Will you now go:

North? Turn to **66**
South? Turn to **61**



132

The moon – full and bright – rises as you press on, but the road soon ends, and you find that you have to make your way with some difficulty through long grass and scrub; you shiver for a moment – there is an eerie, cold feeling in the air, and even Aalandrin's normally calm features are taut. He moves towards you: "The entrance to the Temple is not far now," he says. "We must be on our guard."

Making your way forward tentatively, feeling your way, you realise that you are in an old, untended graveyard. Headstones lurch at odd angles, and the very ground beneath your feet seems to tremble. You stop as, directly ahead of you, the ground bubbles and cracks – and in a sudden explosion of light, a mighty Serpent bursts into view, hissing and spitting. Its powerful, coiled body could crush you to death in an instant, and the great fanged head, as large as a bull's, weaves towards you; for a near-fatal second you are rooted to the spot, mesmerised. But just as the Serpent rears up to strike, an arrow whistles past your cheek and embeds itself in the Serpent's neck.

Suddenly fully aware of the danger facing you, you turn to see that Aalandrin already has another arrow strung, and is aiming it at the Serpent's head: but this time, the arrow glances off and flies away into the night – evidently the scales provide good protection. Aalandrin at once slings his bow across his back once more, and flies over your head, sword at the ready, and closes with the monster. He seems to hang in the air, driving in blow after blow, as the Serpent weaves and twists, attempting to ensnare Aalandrin in its coils, or strike a deadly blow with its fangs. And just as it appears that the elf is winning the struggle, the body whips round him, and the Serpent strikes. Aalandrin's head drops, and the Serpent hurls him to the ground.

You draw your sword; Aalandrin is motionless and you will have to fight alone. You feel a sudden icy burst of courage as you prepare to fight; you are determined on vengeance for Aalandrin. The Serpent has obviously been weakened in its struggles, but is nevertheless a powerful enemy.

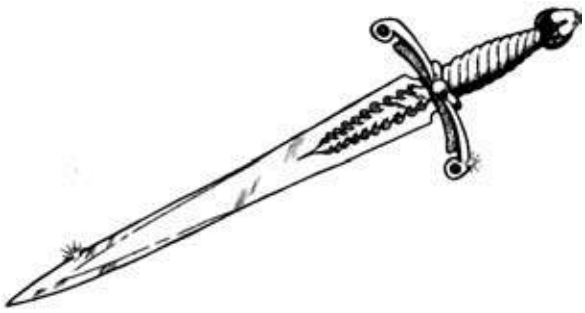
	Dexterity	*Strength*
SERPENT:	9	14

If you defeat the Serpent, turn to **161**.

133

The road goes West, past the quiet houses on either side, some now with lights on against the gathering dusk. Soon, it turns sharply North, and you follow it for some time, until you stop at a junction.

In the distance, at the end of the road East, you can just see the lights of the Inn; you have no desire to go back there, and so you hurry on North. Turn to **105**.



134

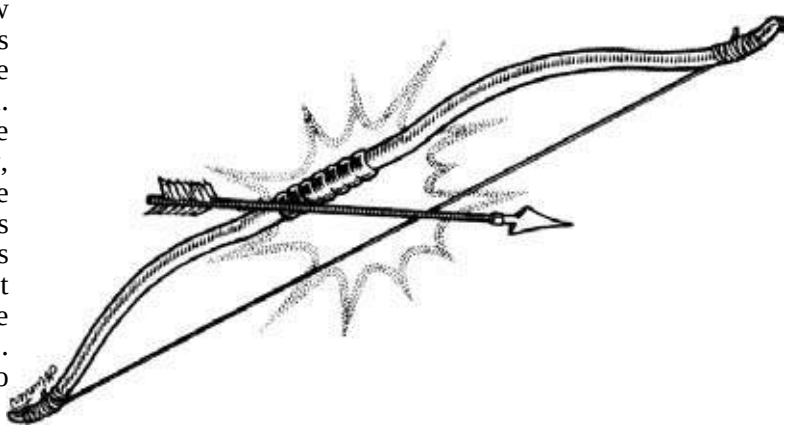
After going North for only a short time, you reach the end of the corridor, and see that you can now go either left or right. Will you go:

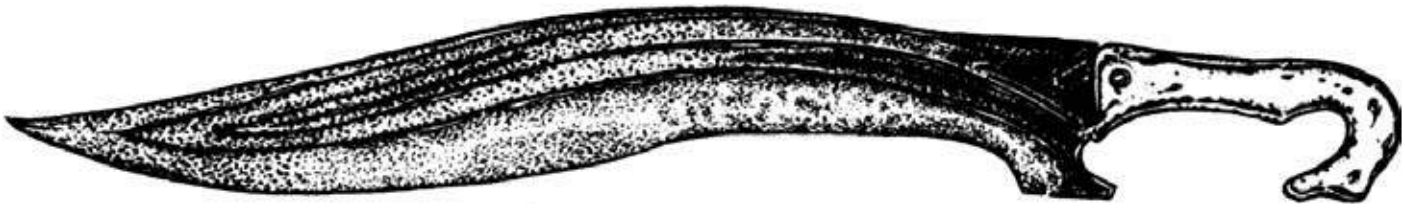
East?	Turn to **189**
West?	Turn to **10**

135

The claustrophobic darkness surrounds you as you travel for some distance North, cocooned in the pool of light afforded by the power of Seeing, until the corridor turns sharply East. Again, you walk some way before you see that there is a passage to your right. Will you:

Take the way South?	Turn to **20**
Continue East?	Turn to **165**





136

The corridor continues East, but you soon see another door, this time on your left. Will you:

Try to open it?	Turn to **139**
Continue on your way East?	Turn to **84**

137

You cast the spell, and are at once surrounded by a black cloud; but your gaze penetrates the cloud, and you can clearly see Gonderak. Her sly smile has gone, and she is looking bewildered, trying to see you through the black mist that surrounds you. Add three points to your Fighting Power for the first two rounds in this battle, and turn to **35**.

138

The door is stiff, but it does not appear to be locked. Putting your shoulder against it, you grit your teeth and push with all your might: slowly, the door grates open, and you look in. There is a smell of damp and great age, and the darkness within is almost tangible, even your power of Seeing does not extend far. Will you:

Investigate the room further?	Turn to **51**
Leave, and continue West?	Turn to **145**

139

Opening the door, your sword at the ready, you are slightly surprised to find that you are in a small room which seems to be quite empty. But as you walk into the room, some sixth sense stops you just as you are about to step into a pit filled with water.

Carefully, you take a step back and examine the pit. Suspicious of everything, you cut a thin strip of leather from your tunic, and dip it into the pool: it is unaffected, and so you cautiously try the water with your little finger. There is no reaction, and you conclude that the pit is indeed filled with plain, slightly warm water.

It is deep – around fifty feet, you estimate; but there is something glowing, blood-red, at the very bottom. The Create Fire spell could be useful here, to evaporate at least some of the water. If you have this spell, and wish to use it, turn to **3**. Otherwise, you can risk diving to discover the source of the glow – turn to **12**; or else leave, to carry on East – turn to **84**.

140

The moment you say the few words that Aalandrin taught you, you feel immensely calm and confident. The spell has taken effect at once, and means that blows struck against you for the first three rounds of fighting cannot harm you. After that, the spell will wear off, and you lose the normal two Strength points if you lose a round in the battle. Each successful blow from you will cause the normal two Strength points of damage to Gonderak. Now you fight to the death: turn to **35**.

141

You will be invulnerable for a short time against any creature, and also against inanimate objects. Cost: three Strength points. Turn to **115**.

142

The road continues South for some time, before turning to the East. You progress with caution, sword at the ready, past the quiet houses on either side, until you reach a new junction. To the North, at the end of a long, straight road, the lights of the Inn glow faintly. So far, you seem to have evaded your pursuers; the road South looks deserted, and so you press on, South. Turn to **152**.

143

As you speak the few words to cast the spell, you feel yourself becoming lighter, and as you complete it, you rise steadily upwards until you reach the high ceiling. An invisible force drives you forwards, and you shield your face as you soar over the fierce heat below, and come to rest back in the corridor, the flames behind you now. At once, you head North, away from the barrier of fire – turn to **188**.

144

Back at the junction, you make your way cautiously East, and a short distance along, you see that there is a door on your left. Turn to **29**.

145

After only a dozen or so paces, you see that there is a corridor South. Will you:

Try the way South?	Turn to **83**
Continue West?	Turn to **104**

146

You leap back and slam the door shut, dropping the locking-bar in place, and as you do so there is a crash, and the door shudders as the beast drives into it. You quickly turn and walk back round the winding corridor, until you return to the junction. You decide to try the way North – turn to **172**.

147

The moment you say the words to cast the spell, you are encircled by a dense black cloud. Moving towards the KILSWIPE again, you are pleased to note that your power of Seeing enables you to make out your enemy quite clearly through the Circle.

But at the last moment, you realise your mistake: the KILSWIPE relies on movement, not sight, in order to locate its foe, and the Circle of Darkness will be totally useless in this fight. You are committed now to battle as normal – turn to **126**.

148

You utter the magic words, and a fierce jet of bright flame shoots from your hand – but with astonishing agility, the AIRSNAKE dives and twists, avoiding the fire and swooping at your outstretched hand. Its fangs close for a moment on your arm, and a shock runs through your body: the bite was poisonous, and costs you three Strength points.

The flame dies away, and the monster hovers, preparing to attack again. Your only hope now is to try to defeat it with your sword – but you feel your chances are not good.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
AIRSNAKE:	13	12

If you survive this battle, turn to **33**.

149

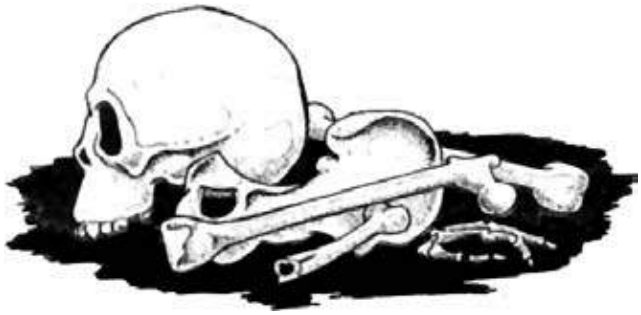
You pass the door on your left, inscribed with the indecipherable runic characters. Without the spell of Translate, you are unable to open it, much as you would like to, and so you continue on your way South, and very soon come to a junction. Will you:

Try the way West?	Turn to **39**
Continue South?	Turn to **81**

150

The keys fit the locks, though the lid of the chest is still firmly shut. But when you press the sapphire and then the ruby into the vacant places, there is a soft click, and the lid moves slightly.

Carefully, you lift the lid, and give a gasp of relief and delight: within is the Sceptre, golden, glowing and jewel-encrusted, the object of your quest. As you are about to lift it out of the chest, however, you hear movement, and stand back, sword drawn. Turn to **75**.



151

You continue along the empty street, until, quite soon, you have to stop at a junction. Again, you must quickly decide which direction to take. Will you take the road:

North?	Turn to **53**
South?	Turn to **196**

152

After only a short time, you stop: there is a way to your left. You move to investigate – but this new way, East, is a dark, smelly alleyway. The road is broken and pitted. Shadows move menacingly, and you have the feeling of being watched. You move back: the way South is well-paved, and there are lights on in the houses at the sides as evening falls.

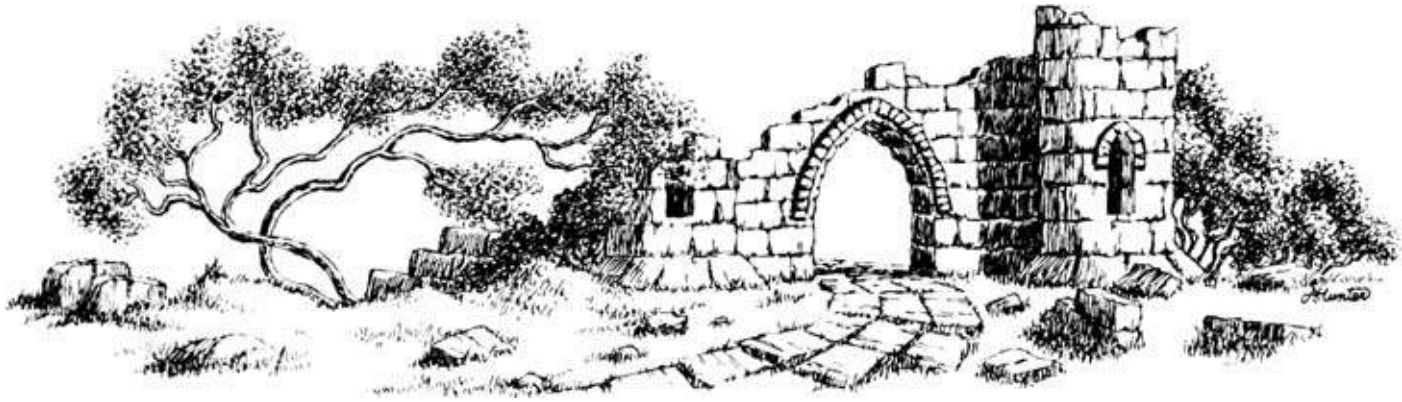
There are a few people about, but they appear to be going about their own business, and pose no threat. You put your sword back in its scabbard, and, trying to breathe normally, walk down the road South. You have gone only a short distance, when you hear what sounds like someone calling your name – turn to **64**.

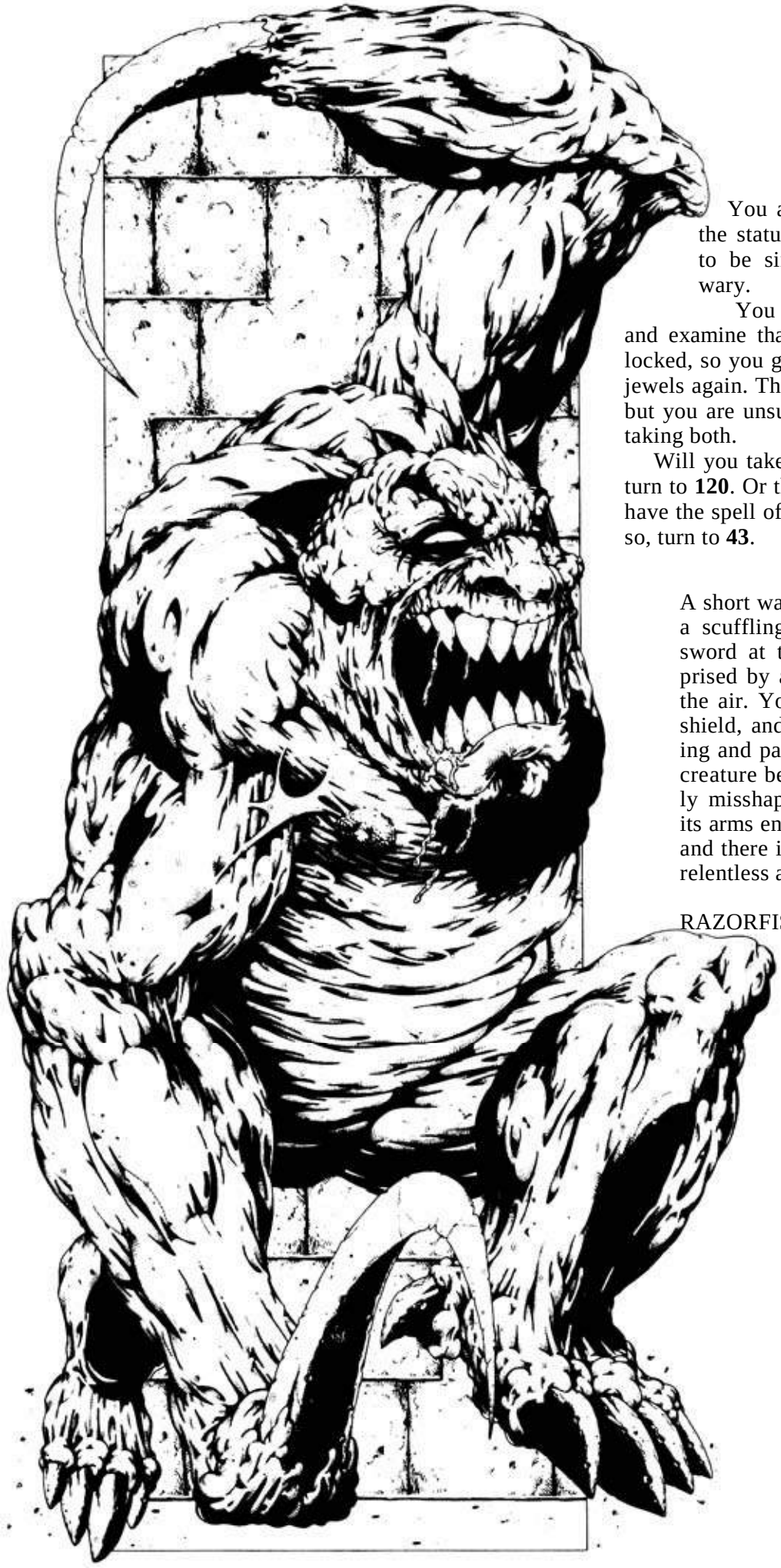
153

The corridor stretches for some distance West, and then turns sharply South. You continue for about the same distance South, until you reach a junction.

You cannot make out much either directly ahead, or down the new way to your left, but the hairs on the back of your neck prickle, as you sense danger in both directions. But you also have the feeling that either way must bring you closer to your goal. Will you:

Go East?	Turn to **180**
Continue South?	Turn to **72**





154

The statue itself is unremarkable, and made of grey stone; but in either outstretched palm lies a large, radiant jewel. In the left hand is a huge, glittering diamond, and in the right hand an equally large and sparkling sapphire.

You are suspicious, and walk right round the statue, examining it carefully; it appears to be simply inert stone, but you are still wary.

You go over to the door in the South wall, and examine that. It is quite featureless, and firmly locked, so you go back to the statue and consider the jewels again. They are too great a prize to be missed, but you are unsure which to take, or whether to risk taking both.

Will you take the jewel from the left hand? If so, turn to **120**. Or the right hand? Turn to **58**. Or do you have the spell of Knowing, and wish to try it here? If so, turn to **43**.

155

A short way South, you can hear, not far ahead, a scuffling, hissing noise. You inch forward, sword at the ready, but are nevertheless surprised by a sudden blow that whistles through the air. You fend it off just in time with your shield, and stand your ground, ducking, weaving and parrying a barrage of impacts from the creature before you. Humanoid, but grotesquely misshapen, this is a RAZORFIST. Each of its arms ends in a razor-sharp, scythe-like blade, and there is no time for magic, as it pursues its relentless attack. Resolve your battle:

	Dexterity	*Strength*
RAZORFIST:	11	14

If you win, turn to **62**.

156

A short distance along, there is a door on your right. Looking closely at it, you can see no obvious way to open the door, and it does not give in the slightest when you attempt to push it open. You step back and look again: there are two lines of strange characters inscribed in the door, which make no sense to you at all. However, it seems likely that this foreign writing holds some clue to the way through the door, and you realise that the spell of Translate may well release its secret. If you have this spell, turn to **157**. If not, you will have to continue on your way North, never knowing what lay behind the door – turn to **16**.

157

As you quietly speak the words to cast the spell, the strange runic characters take on a meaning in your mind. You need only to speak the word "Narth-a-gol", and the door will open.

You step back, and rather cautiously, speak the word – and the door at once obediently swings open. The room is small, and you can see that, within, there is only an ornate table, on which is a velvet cushion; and nestling on the velvet cushion is a small golden box.

You walk in to examine this more closely. The box opens easily, and contains an elaborate gold key. At once, you put this in your backpack, and after another quick look around, leave the room. The door shuts again, and as you watch, the runic characters dissolve and re-form into an entirely different set. The spell that you cast has obviously worn off, as they convey no meaning to you. Shrugging your shoulders, you consider what to do next. You can either go North – turn to **16**, or South – turn to **47**.

158

At the end of the corridor, you reach a North–South junction. Both ways look familiar, and you realise that you have walked round in a loop. The wooden bridge, and the rest of the way South is still unexplored, however, and so you head South – turn to **108**.

159

You speak the magic words, and a dense black cloud encircles you. But almost at once, you realise your mistake – the AIRSNAKE is *above* you, and can see you perfectly. Faster than your eyes can follow, it swoops, sinking its poisonous fangs into your neck. The vicious claws tear at your flesh, and the powerful barbed tail whips into your body repeatedly. The monster darts away, and hovers, preparing to strike again, and you realise that the end is close, as the poison floods through your system, and the terrible wounds inflicted weaken you so that you can barely stand. The room swims in and out of focus, as the AIRSNAKE dives again . . . your quest is over.

160

As far as you can make out, there is no lock or keyhole, and you tentatively try to lift the lid with your sword. You gasp as the glow from your power of Seeing is reflected from thousands of gold coins! Moving to the chest, you dig your hands into the hoard and let the coins flow through like a golden waterfall.

You would love to take back all this treasure, but it is so heavy that you cannot even lift the chest. You content yourself with a few handfuls, but even so the weight of the coins means that it will cost you one Strength point to carry them. Will you now:

Leave, and continue West? Turn to **145**
Investigate the ornate jar? Turn to **112**

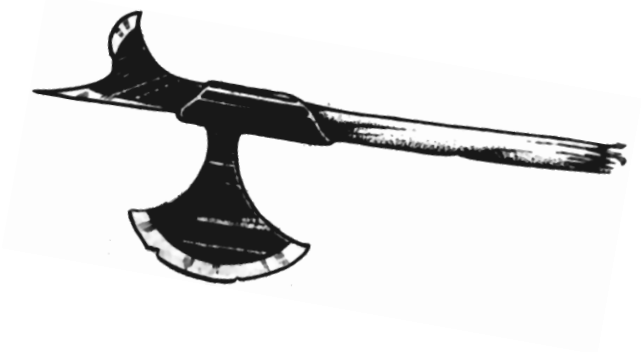
161

The great Serpent dead at your feet, you turn to see whether there is anything you can do for Aalandrin. He lies cold and still in the pale moonlight; but as you lift his head, you realise, with a sudden surge of hope, that he is moving. His hand flutters at a pouch on his belt, and you quickly pull open the pouch. Inside are three very small bottles, and, fighting panic, you fumble to open one, and hold it to his lips. For a second, nothing happens, but then his eyelids open, he blinks several times, and slowly sits up. He eyes the dead monster. "Many thanks," he gasps. "I see I have a brave ally." He gets unsteadily to his feet, and takes out the remaining two bottles from his pouch. "In a few moments," he tells you, "I shall be fully recovered; it was a Potion of Rejuvenation that you gave me. I have only two remaining, but I owe you my life. Take one."

Wondering, you take the small bottle and put it carefully in your backpack. "When you are close to death," says Aalandrin, "this Potion will make you strong again. Do not use it unless it is absolutely necessary." At once, he turns, and you continue quickly but warily South; and within a minute the Temple of Eternal Darkness looms ahead of you, built of black rock into which is carved the faces of demons. As you stop and consider how to enter the Temple, Aalandrin becomes thoughtful. "There is one more power which I can give you," he says, "and which you will need. It is called Seeing."

His eyes close, and he seems to go into a trance for several seconds. Then he speaks, in a language unlike anything you have ever heard before, his voice deep and rasping. He stops, sweating and pale, and looks at you. "Now you will be able to make your way through the endless night within," he says.

You realise, with a sudden start, that the ground ahead of you is lit as bright as day: from directly above your head a glow seems to emanate. You look up but can see nothing. The elf, watching you, gives a wry smile. "Come," he says, "the entrance is directly ahead of us." Turn to **79**



162

As you cast the spell, two of the squares begin to glow with a faint light – one exactly in the centre of the door, and one in the extreme top left-hand corner. Reaching out, you cautiously press one, then the other, and then both simultaneously. The

Hunter

moment you touch both squares together, the door flies sideways into the wall with a faint hiss.

Taking great care, you move forward, and shortly see that there is a door on your left. Looking more closely, you see that it is a solid, brass-bound door inscribed with runic characters. As you examine the characters, there is a whispering sound from the North, and you see that the door through which you entered has slid shut.

You look again at the characters on the door to your left, and realise that there is little point in trying to charge or strike the door – the runic characters must hold the key to the way through. If you have the spell of Translate, and wish to use it here, turn to **157**. Otherwise, you will have to continue on your way South – turn to **47**.

163

In a second, you are through the doorway, and running South down the empty street, sword in hand. After a hundred yards you stop, slightly breathless, at a junction. You look quickly around – all seems to be quiet, but you know that Fallagon's men must be in pursuit, and you must make a decision at once. Will you:

Continue South?	Turn to **152**
Take the new road West?	Turn to **133**

164

You say that you have no quarrel with him, that you are a lone adventurer, seeking challenges, and, you hope, rewards.

"And what challenge, or reward, are you seeking now?" asks Aalandrin, still motionless.

You are by now becoming more than a little irritated by his manner; and there is one sure way, you decide, to find out which side Aalandrin is on. You briefly describe your fight with Fallagon, and your escape from Thorndrake, ready to draw your own sword at any second. But at the end of your brief tale, Aalandrin stares hard at you for a moment, and then slowly puts away his sword. "If it's a challenge that you are after," he says, "you're on the right road. This road leads straight to the Temple of Eternal Darkness." You both relax, and Aalandrin invites you to sit for a moment at the side of the road, while he tells you his tale.

He is, you learn, an elf, one of a brotherhood of elves. There are many such brotherhoods and sisterhoods, and, to a human, each member of a clan appears identical. He goes on: "However, that is by the way. I was on my way South myself, when I sensed you behind me, to regain the Sceptre from the Temple. You know nothing of this," he says, reading your puzzled look. "Let me explain. To the East, is our forest; we have lived there for centuries. But one night, not long ago, we were taken by surprise when a powerful and evil barbarian called Tyran attacked us with a strong army. The battle raged for a night and a day, until Tyran's army was defeated. But during the battle, Gallibran, our present King, was badly wounded, and even now he lies on his bed in the elven forest, barely alive. We have used all our magical powers to sustain him, but his life is slowly draining away. Only the extraordinary power of the Sceptre can save him now, and so it must be found and brought back, before it is too late."

Seeing that you are still a little puzzled, Aalandrin continues, a little impatiently "Gallibran's Sceptre was lost to Tyran during that great battle, and many elves have sought it since. The only one to return told us, before he died, that it is held in the Temple of Eternal Darkness, a place so evil that even the brightest sunlight cannot penetrate its windows. There, Tyran broods, hoping no doubt that he could use the power of the Sceptre for his own ends; he will have discovered by now that it is useless to anyone so evil. But still he keeps it – perhaps out of spite, perhaps in the knowledge that we are weakened by his attack, and that without the Sceptre our King will soon die. Then, I think, he will attack again." He pauses, looking at you carefully. "I would welcome an ally," he adds, cautiously, "in my attempt to reclaim the Sceptre of the Elvenking."

After only a few moments' thought, you agree, intrigued by this elf and his tale. At once, Aalandrin gets to his feet. "We must hurry then," he says, but as you get up, he suddenly holds up his hand, his brow creased in thought. "Wait. I may be able to teach you a little of our magic. There is not enough time for you to learn much, but even a little is better than nothing." Turn to **115**.

165

Very soon, you see that there is a passage to your left, and can just make out the door through which you first entered the Temple at its end. Ignoring that way, you continue East, until you find yourself at another junction. Will you now:

Take the new way South?	Turn to **9**
Continue East?	Turn to **189**

166

You follow the road South, and ignore the narrow road that appears almost at once on your left, hurrying out of Thorndrake and down a broad, tree-lined path, until you again reach a junction. There is a new way to your left, a path which appears to narrow until it enters a forest, some distance to the East.

As you deliberate, a figure steps from the trees ahead of you. He is tall, athletic, and has a commanding presence. A long cloak flows from his shoulders, across which is a bow. A quiver of arrows is strapped to his back, and he has his hand on his sword-hilt. He steps towards you, expressionless.

"What brings you here?" he asks. "Strangers are not made welcome in these parts."

Warily, you ask in turn what he is doing.

"My name is Aalandrin," he says, as if in explanation, and draws his sword. Will you:

Try to keep talking?	Turn to **164**
Draw your own sword, and fight?	Turn to **191**

167

You cast the spell, and wait: and it gradually becomes obvious to you that there are no secret panels or levers to be discovered. It seems that the only way to get through this door is by means of the key, and you have no alternative but to go back West and North to the junction. Once at the junction, the corridor East is the only unexplored route, and so you head that way – turn to **194**.

168

You have walked barely a dozen paces East when you notice a door on the left. Will you:

Try to open the door?	Turn to **55**
Continue East?	Turn to **123**

169

Passing under the archway into the room beyond, you stop to examine the chest. You see that on opposite sides are locks, one of silver and one of gold.

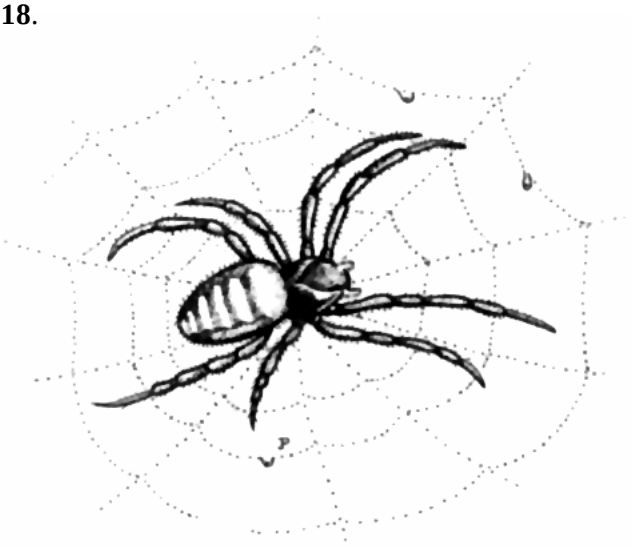
Looking more closely, you realise that the jewel-encrusted chest has two spaces from which precious stones have been removed, on one side a sapphire, and on the other a ruby. If you have a gold key and a silver key, a sapphire and a ruby, turn to **150**. If you have not got all of these, turn to **174**.

170

Quietly, you say the words to cast the spell, and wait. After a few moments, you feel a strange tingling sensation in your scalp, and suddenly, with immense clarity and confidence, you view the floorboards again: they are quite safe. You walk straight across to the door – turn to **63**.

171

The door, you see, is inlaid with thousands of small squares of black wood alternating with squares of white wood, and as you cast the spell taught to you by Aalandrin, two of the squares begin to glow – one in the centre of the door, and one in the top right-hand corner. You try pressing one, then the other, and then both together: and the moment you do so, the door flies into the wall, making a faint whispering sound. You go through, and hear the door shut behind you again, as you continue North – turn to **118**.



172

There is an archway at the end of the corridor North, and as you get closer, you can see a glittering, jewelled chest in the room beyond. Turn to **169**.

173

As you speak the number, there is a sudden flash of glittering light around the perimeter of the wall ahead, and it slowly shimmers, gradually fading before your eyes. The light glows and dies, and you see that there is a narrow stone passageway ahead. It is just wide enough for you to squeeze through, and after moving South only a few feet, you find yourself facing another blank wall. Desperately, you search for levers, buttons or some inscription that will help you to get through, but in vain.

You are on the point of giving up in despair when one of the stone blocks that you are pushing at makes a dull grating noise, and the wall slides back. Immediately, you move through, into a corridor that runs East-West. As you do so, the wall behind you slides quickly shut again. On this side, it is panelled in the same dark wood as the rest of the corridor, and blends in so perfectly that no-one would ever suspect its existence.

You look to your left and right, but neither direction appears particularly inviting; however, you must make a decision. Will you go:

East?	Turn to **186**
West?	Turn to **8**

174

You have fought hard and well in your quest, but without the necessary keys and jewels, you are unable to open the glittering casket within which, some instinct tells you, lies the Sceptre. You may be able to get out of the Temple, if you are lucky, and try again, once you have recovered your strength. But, this time, you have failed in your quest.

175

The battle over, you sheathe your sword and quickly check Kathep's clothes. Almost hidden in the folds of his skins is a piece of parchment, and you hold it up to the light and unfold it. You read, "Beware the door with ten handles. Nine of them are death, only the fourth is safe."

Thinking about this, you continue South, as the road quickly narrows to an alleyway barely wide enough to walk along. You have to stop abruptly, as your passage is barred by a solid metal gate across the alley – and set into the gate, in a row across the centre, are ten handles. Remembering the words of the parchment, you reach out – and stop! Did the words mean the fourth handle from the left is safe, or the fourth from the right? Will you:

Try the fourth handle from the left?	Turn to **99**
Try the fourth handle from the right?	Turn to **107**
Turn round and head back North?	Turn to **30**

176

Raising your hand, you say the magic word that Aalandrin taught you, and the silver blade flashes from beneath your wrist towards the heart of Gonderak. But with an expert movement, she twists, and deflects the blade with her sword into the floorboards at her feet.

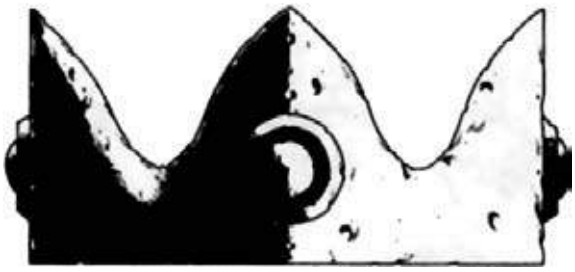
Dismayed, you remember that Aalandrin told you that the Wrist Knife was only of real use against creatures of the air. Gonderak advances, her smile changed now into a grimace of hate, and you must fight to the death – turn to **35**.

177

You quickly cast the spell, and the AIRSNAKE gives a furious hiss, swooping and diving. However, it obviously cannot see you, and you are able to dodge its attacks easily. You get quickly out of the room before the spell wears off, and continue East – turn to **57**.

178

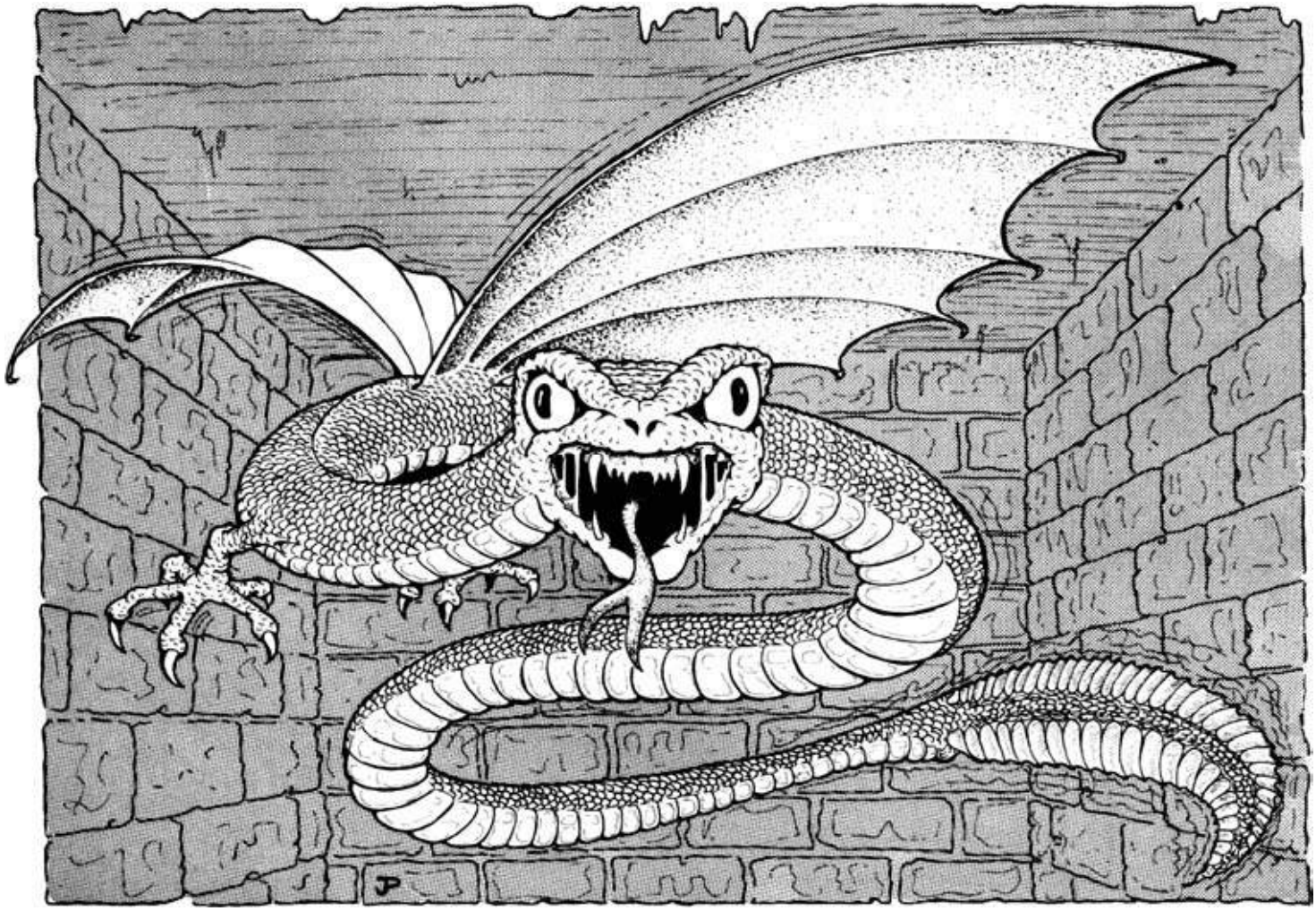
You move at a fast jog along the quiet street, and after a short distance, it turns South. You continue South until you come to a junction, and stop to think. Evening is fast approaching, but you can just make out the lights of the Inn in the distance, due East. You have no wish to go back there, and so you hurry on South. Turn to **142**.



179

Kicking the door wide open, you run through, ready for action. Directly opposite, coiled round what appears to be a pile of eggs, is a snake-like creature, eyeing you balefully. As you watch, a pair of leathery wings unfolds from its back, and it rises to the ceiling of the small, stone room you are in, and circles above you. As well as fanged jaws, it has two short limbs with talons, and a powerful barb at the end of its tail. It darts round the room at great speed, then makes a dive – your raised shield protects you from the impact, but in a blur of movement, the AIRSNAKE whips back up to the ceiling and hovers, its jaws open and barbed tail quivering.

Against such a fast and dangerous opponent, your best chance is magic. You may try any of the following spells, if you have them: Invisibility – turn to **177**; Create Fire – turn to **148**; Wrist Knife – turn to **54**; Circle of Darkness – turn to **159**. If you have none of these spells, turn to **111**.



180

You are grateful for your power of Seeing as you progress down the Eastern corridor: not far ahead the floorboards are crumbling and rotten, and you press on with increasing caution, until you have to stop – ahead of you, the floor has collapsed completely. There is a yawning pit at your feet, although the floorboards appear sound about five yards beyond.

If you have the spell of Flight and wish to use it here, turn to **102**. The only other alternatives are to risk jumping across – turn to **80**, or else turn round and go back West – turn to **37**.

181

The way South twists and turns, as you go West, quite soon after setting off South, then South again a short way, before turning East. The corridor East is not a long one, and soon ends at a barred wooden door, beyond which you can hear a snuffling, grunting sound.

Warily you lift the bar and open the door to look beyond: in a huge smelly stable is an animal the size of a bull, with a bull's sharp horns, but also tusks like a boar's. This is a MALGAROTH, and it has seen you! Swiftly, you must decide what to do, as it lowers its head to charge. The spell of Invisibility, if you possess it, should be of help – turn to **41**. Alternatively, you can jump back and try to bar the door again before the beast reaches you – turn to **146**; or draw your sword and fight – turn to **48**.

182

Casting the spell, you move forwards again. It seems that the KILSWIPE has detected your movement, as it begins swinging its club and sword madly; but you pass by unharmed, like a ghost, smiling a little to yourself, and continue West, as the spell begins to wear off. Turn to **31**.

183

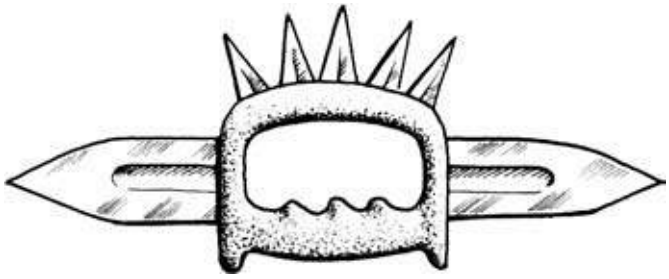
You walk for a long way East, watching for traps, but your passage is uneventful. The corridor at last turns to the South, and, after a short distance, East again, before it ends at a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **156**
South?	Turn to **81**

184

The road East soon ends, at a North-South junction. Will you now take the road:

North?	Turn to **13**
South?	Turn to **4**



185

You begin to wonder what dreadful part of the world you have strayed into, as, continuing on your way, the bodies of the Dwarfs now behind you, the road abruptly ends. You press on through long grass and scrub; there is an eerie, cold feeling in the air. As the moon rises, you can make out your surroundings more clearly – you are in an old, untended graveyard. Amid the thick undergrowth, headstones lurch; you feel yourself beginning to shake and sweat, as you look desperately around, fighting shadows.

But even as you stand, trying to get your nerves under control, the ground at your feet begins to tremble and break – and in a sudden explosion of light, a mighty Serpent rears from the ground. You can hear the blood roaring in your ears, and your heart crashing against your chest. Paralysed with fear, your final memory is of the Serpent's coils whipping about your body, as it raises its head to strike . . . You have failed.

186

The corridor stretches for some way East, and you move with caution, grateful for the power of Seeing, which casts a golden glow ahead of you as you walk. Behind, the inky blackness closes in again, like some evil fluid. The corridor eventually turns sharply South, and after a short distance, East again, until you soon reach a junction. Will you now go:

North?	Turn to **156**
South?	Turn to **81**

187

The corridor soon turns sharply East, and you follow it until the way is blocked by a solid iron door. It is locked, but there is a keyhole: if you have an iron key, and wish to try it in the door, turn to **38**. Alternatively, you could try the spell of Intuition, if you have it, in the hope of finding a hidden lever or panel that will open the door: turn to **167**. Your only other option is to turn around and go back West and North to the last junction – turn to **144**.

188

Not very far North along the corridor, you become aware of a passage to your right. Will you:

Continue North?	Turn to **135**
Try the way East?	Turn to **180**

189

You walk with care along the gloomy corridor, your power of Seeing providing a pool of light ahead of you until you see that there is another corridor to your right. Ahead, the corridor looks as though it turns right eventually, but you are not close enough to be sure. Will you go:

South?	Turn to **83**
Continue East?	Turn to **169**

MKDUNN 85

190

You run East, sword in hand, hardly aware of your surroundings; the road turns South, and you reach a junction. West, you can see the Inn, and so you hurry on Southwards. Turn to **196**.

191

Even as you draw your sword, you raise your shield only just in time to fend off a swift thrust, and find that you are driven quickly backwards as you defend against a flurry of sword-strokes. Clearly, your opponent is a master swordsman. You regain your composure and stand your ground, prepared for a demanding battle.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
AALANDRIN:	13	14

If you win, turn to **7**.

192

The corridor goes South for only a short while, before turning sharply East. You hurry on, but perhaps a little too quickly, as a trapdoor opens beneath your feet, and you fall heavily into a small, damp basement. Lose one Dexterity point and three Strength points. If you are still alive, turn to **131**.

193

You set off West, and Aalandrin gives a brief wave as he at once walks in the opposite direction. Your power of Seeing allows you to watch either side of you, as well as the way ahead. As you progress, the oppressive blackness closes behind you; but you have not gone far before you see that there is a new corridor, on your left. Will you:

Try the new way South?	Turn to **20**
Continue West?	Turn to **153**

194

A short distance along the corridor East, you stop when you see that there is a door on your left, and consider what to do now – turn to **29**.

195

Taking a deep breath, you mutter the words that Aalandrin taught you, and wait, your nerves as taut as bow-strings. There is silence, and then a ghostly, echoing laugh that seems to swirl around you. With a sinking heart, you realise that this part of the Temple is resistant to the elf's magic; you will have to work out for yourself the Number to Pass.

196

You have gone only a few yards South when a door is suddenly flung open ahead of you, on the right, and an ugly, powerful-looking character blocks your path. Dressed in animal skins, he is totally bald, and a deep war is etched down the right side of his face. He has a sword at either side, and now draws them; he folds his arms in a contemptuous gesture, and sneers. "Fallagon, our great leader, is dead," he says mockingly. "Now I, Kathep, am leader. You have

saved me a job, Stranger – Fallagon's time was due. But nevertheless," he adds, laughing, "I must, of course, avenge him."

Shield raised, you draw your sword at once, as Kathep advances. This is a fight to the death.

	Dexterity	*Strength*
KATHEP:	10	12

If you win, turn to **175**.

197

Fairly soon, the road turns to the South, and you make as good progress as you can on the uneven, pot-holed surface. There is a tense, menacing feeling in the air, and you are glad to get to the end of the road. You are at a junction. Will you go:

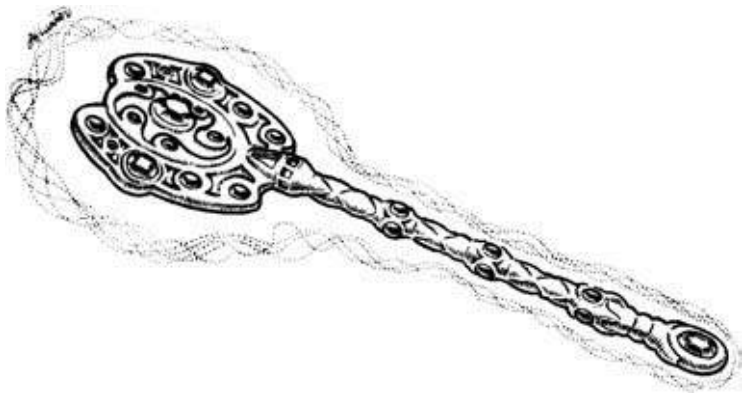
West? Turn to **113**
South? Turn to **4**

198

The barbarian ruler dead, you wipe your sword and sheathe it before turning your attention back to the chest. Lifting the Sceptre out, you marvel at the sense of power you feel merely holding it, even in the centre of the evil Temple.

You retrace your steps: before the power of the Sceptre, doors fly open, and no creature challenges you. Soon, you are walking North, back through the graveyard, and on until you reach the junction East that leads to the elves' forest. As you turn East, a figure steps into your path, eyeing both you and the Sceptre warily. You gasp – for a moment, you think you are seeing a ghost; the cloaked figure with his bow across his back is identical to Aalandrin. Then you remember what Aalandrin told you, at the beginning of your adventure, about the brotherhoods of elves, that each member appeared identical to a human.

You raise your hand in greeting, and briefly recount your adventure, and the elf at once turns, asking you to follow him. You head East together, deep into the forest of the elves. You notice that it is unnaturally quiet – the sun is rising, but there is no dawn chorus of birds; there is great sadness in the air. Turn to **200**.



199

As you cast the spell, one of the wooden panels in the wall of the corridor to the right of the door assumes increasing importance, until you cannot take your eyes off it. As if drawn by a magnet, you move to it and press, and the door silently opens. Very warily, you look within: the room is completely empty, except for a single iron key, hanging from a hook on the wall opposite. Uncertainly, you dart into the room and take the key, one eye on the door.

But it seems that you are safe for the moment, and you swiftly put the key into your backpack, and retreat back into the corridor – and just as you do so, the door closes as firmly as before.

After a quick look around, you continue on your way West – turn to **27**.

200

At last the trees begin to thin out, until you realise that you are walking along a straight path, soft and deep with green moss, lined by trees as tall and straight as sentries. At the end of this path, the elf stops suddenly, and gives a call, unlike anything you have heard before, like the cry of an eagle but with the edge and power of a lion's roar.

As the cry fades into the woods, an opening appears in the grassy mound before you, and you follow the elf into a torch-lit hall. There are double doors at the end of the hall, with two elves standing guard, but as soon as they see the Sceptre they open the doors at once. The elf who has accompanied you this far now stands back and beckons you forward, and, totally at a loss, you pass through the doors and into a large, high-ceilinged room. The torches are dim in this room, and the air smells fresh, a faint suggestion of herbs that you cannot identify.

At the end of the room, three elves are gathered round a bed on which lies a man, gaunt and pale, scarcely breathing. One of the elves steps forward: she is identical to Ravellia, but it seems like an age since you met her while escaping from Thorndrake. Reading your thoughts, she says, "Yes, I am Ravellia, and we are deep in your debt. Gallibran is very close to death now, but the power of the Sceptre may yet save him."

All that day and the following night you stay as a guest of the elves. You repeat your story again and again, and they begin making songs about your exploits, and the bravery of Aalandrin. Then at last, towards the end of the second day, comes the news you have all been awaiting, while saying nothing: the great spell of Healing, making use of the power of the Sceptre, has been successful. Gallibran is fast recovering.

The following night, you are guest of honour at a great banquet. Gallibran, fully recovered and resplendent in a silver cloak and green sash, sits at the head of the table, and you sit on his right. The elves sing the songs they have rehearsed, that tell of your courage and honour, and you eat, drink, and laugh until morning comes, and it is time for rest.

Some days later, you decide, with some reluctance, that it is time to leave the pleasant company of the elves, and move on, in search of new adventures. But before you leave, Gallibran has a special promise to make to you: should you ever be in this part of the world again, and need help in a dangerous situation, you can rely on the elves to fight to the death at your side.

MESSAGES from BEYOND

Dear PROTEUS,

Oh, how wonderful, utterly brill, amazingly fantastic, super ace, tab your magazine is. Or is it? Why print all this "super dooper" stuff about your mag. Oh yes, it contains a *free poster*, mini RPG and *advertisements* but why, oh why (please have mercy for me) print all the letters that say "your mag. is WOW"/"it's brill"/ "utterly eye popping" etc . . . for heaven's sake (mercy, mercy) print some of the bad comments to let others, and yourselves, know what they feel are the "bad parts" of your magazine. Sorry to be so critical but what does one have to do to get a letter published? I hope many other PROTEUS players agree with me.

P.S. I was just about to write a good point about your mag. when all of a sudden my typewriter blew up.

Baldon Firehammer,
Brighton,
Sussex.

We will print the bad comments if only more people would send them in – honestly!

Dear PROTEUS,

I started reading your fab magazine Issue 5 and realised what I had been missing. One word sums up my thoughts on it – 'WOW'. You are certainly on a winner with PROTEUS, but enough praise and down to some criticism (shock, horror!). Yes, I'm going to actually criticize your Ace Mag!

Firstly, I think that the artists could put a little more effort into their work. Secondly, there should be more pages, so you could have reviews of books or games, and maybe even a double page of readers' art of fantasy creatures and it could be called 'PROTEUS pictures'.

Liam McMurray,
Yeovil,
Somerset.

Thanks for your ideas; watch for further developments.

Dear PROTEUS,

Last year when someone told me about a fantasy adventure game magazine I was overjoyed.

1. Because my name's Proteus.

2. I collect fantasy game books and I am mad on fantasy. I think your magazine is brilliant but you could improve it by having a page on the latest role playing news. I wish you all the best in your magazine.

Proteus Duxbur,
Wareham,
Dorset.

We can't figure out what your name's an anagram of.

Dear PROTEUS,

I think your magazine is Ace but could you make it a bit longer? I find the puzzles etc. very hard. Why don't you have a Top Ten of adventure game books?

Paul McCallum,
Alexandria,
Scotland.

How long would you like it to be? We may have book reviews in future issues.

Dear PROTEUS,

I have just read your No. 6 mag. I would like to say that I am a girl and read your mag, like many of my friends. Some of my friends think me weird because I have your posters all around my room instead of pop posters.

I have bought all your mags but not No. 1. I think that they are all very cleverly set out though I would like to see more riddles. I think that whoever does the illustrations has an incredible skill and I am very jealous of him/her.

Helen Fullerton,
Mill Hill,
London.

All our artists are identified on page one.

Dear PROTEUS,

I am writing to say that I agree with David Buxton, Rory O'Bryan and S. Dickenson because:

1. I think you should have a few pages to illustrate miniatures, and where you can buy them, as this would be a great help to collectors (like myself) and Wargamers.

2. I also think you should start a PROTEUS fantasy fan club with lots of goodies like membership cards, secret passwords, posters. T-Shirts, badges, PROTEUS binders etc.

3. I do not have a copy of PROTEUS No. 1 either and I am offering £1.50 to anyone who has a copy of PROTEUS No. 1 (in good condition, with or without the poster).

PROTEUS fantasy art is fantastically lifelike and superbly drawn. My favourite artist is Gary Harrod. One complaint: in PROTEUS 6 (page 35) I saw (shock horror!!) that the PROTEUS fantasy sweatshirts were only available up to 32" chest. I myself am 36" chest and I am wondering if you could please make them a bit bigger, as I am thinking of buying one (Lizard-Man Design).

Last, but no means least, since nearly everybody has sent in a picture of their creatures and monsters, I have enclosed a picture of my monster. I hope you like it and could you please print it for me as I would be most grateful.

P.S. I forgot to draw the other arm on the other side of the monsters (Bull Monster) body (sorry!). So could you please ask one of the PROTEUS artists to draw it in.

Derek Wilson,
Glenrothes,
Scotland.

Your picture is reproduced above – we thought it was too good to let our artists loose on! See page 4 for our (larger) sweatshirt offer.

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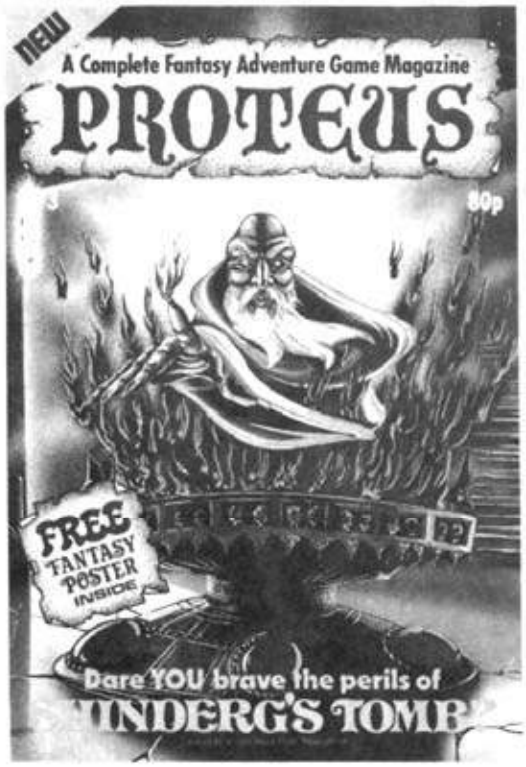

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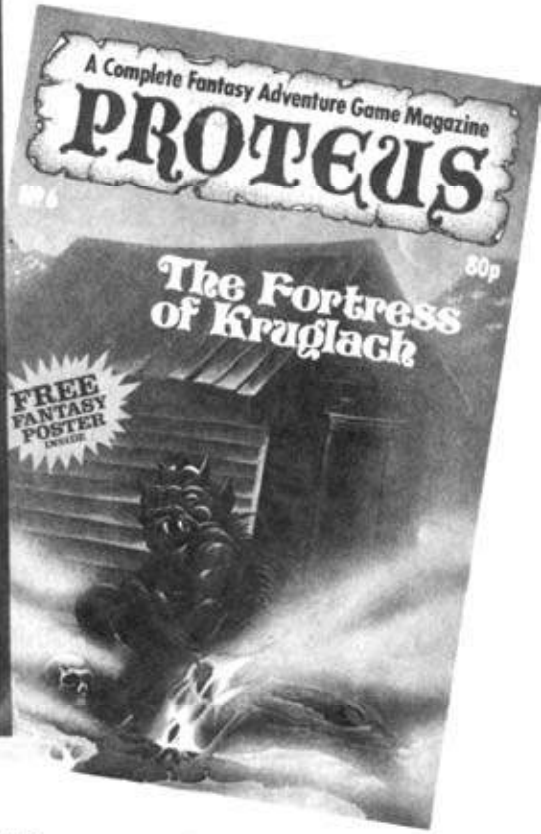

PROTEUS

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Copies cost £1 each including postage (£1.50 overseas, surface mail). Sorry, No. 1 is now sold out.